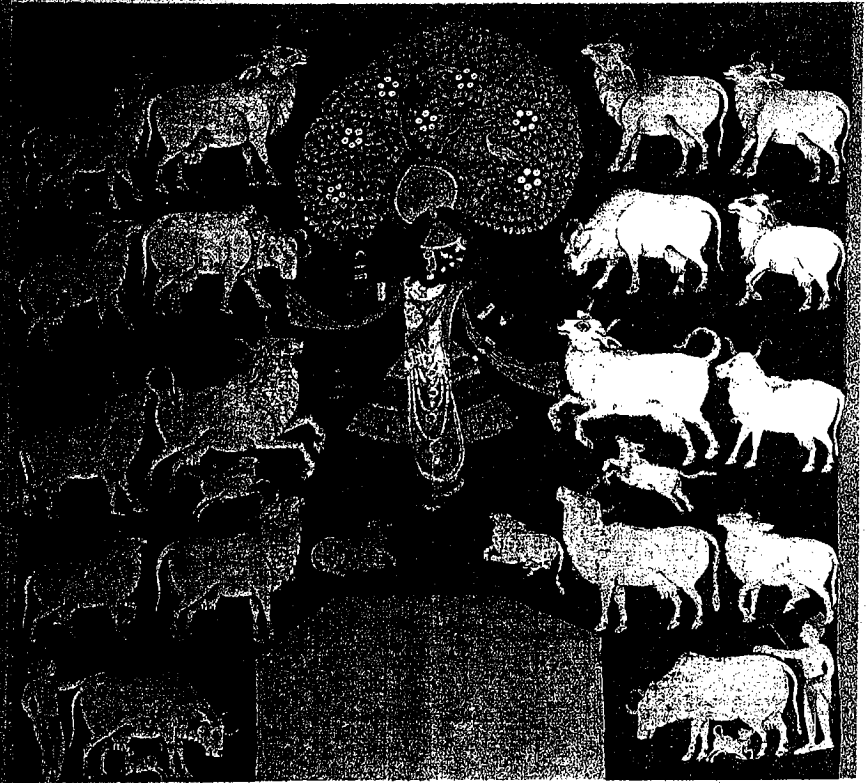


Shyamdas was born in Connecticut, USA, on February 11, 1953, as Stephen Schaffer. When he was eighteen, he journeyed to India in search of the well-known saint, Neem Karoli Baba. He found Maharajji in Vrindaban and then fell in love with the Vraja area, the site of Radha-Krishna's lilas. Shyamdas then studied with many bhakti yoga teachers in that enchanted place and took bhakti initiation from His Holiness Shri Goswami Prathameshji, one of the most respected descendants of Vallabhacharya. Shyamdas has written numerous books about the Path of Grace and has translated devotional material from Braja Bhasa, Hindi, Gujarati, and Sanskrit. He presently divides his time between Vrindavan and the United States, where he teaches, sings and continues to write on the Blessed Path of Devotion.

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THE AMAZING STORY
of
SHRI NATHJI

Translated by Shyamdas
Edited by Tulsi and Asim Krishna Das

The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

A translation of *Srinathji ki Prakatya Varta* by Shyamdas

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PREFACE

A short preamble to the “amazing” tale to follow, in which an editor wishes to make a few observations that may be of service to the various readers he envisages.

The most blessed readers are the devotees, who will probably be the majority of readers. The least has to be said to them, for Shri Nathji has blessed them with inner vision. His *lilas* have never ceased from playing in their hearts and they will read these “amazing” tales with glee. The spiritual truth within them will increase such readers’ awareness and they will glory in the inner meanings they will never cease to find in these stories. While unable to count myself among these blessed ones, I can mention that, as an editor and contributor to this book, I have found never-ceasing, ever-increasing happiness in going through these tales, time after time, searching for errors of spelling and grammar and so forth. I myself bow to such blessed souls and hope for the blessings bestowed by the dust of their feet.

The second group of readers I envision are of a more scholarly disposition. They have heard of the famous Brajabhasha stories concerning Shri Nathji (these tales are perhaps the first, and certainly the most famous, prose work in that language noted for its bhakti poetry) and, lo and behold, here is an easy way to read them in contemporary language. They are likely to be looking for “historical truth”. I wish to caution such readers that this is a running translation of the tales. It can serve as a “crib sheet”, through which they may find what material is available in the original text, but I would request them to go back to that text for their own researches.



It may also be necessary to mention to these readers that the “historical” content of this *amazing* tale is not its major thrust. It was written years after the appearance of Shri Nathji is said to have occurred. According to the original text I have, published by the “Vidyavibhaga Mandira Mandala Nathadvara” in samvat 2049 (this is not the edition used by Shyamadas for his translation), it is written by Hariraya epitomized as “mahanubhava”, one who has had great experiences. Indeed, according to the tales of his own encounters with Shri Nathji herein, he certainly had great experiences! On the first page of the original text it is said that he wrote it having compiled the “*vacanamrta* (immortal, nectarine words) and so forth of Sri Gokulanathaji”. What was written or, more likely, spoken by the earlier or original author, Sri Gokulanathaji, is not clearly demarcated from what was written by Sri Hariraya ji, and the overall historical veracity is uncertain simply because it is sectarian literature about which we can say little concerning date or authors. Hence, caution is advised when trying to base research data on such fragile material.

There are a number of research works which have dealt with the various questions posed by this text and its context: the life of Madhavendrapuri, for example, has been scrutinized by the scholar Friedrich Hardy in at least one article and in his fine book on *Viraha Bhakti*, to a certain extent. There are frequent mentions of Madhavendrapuri in the hagiographical works of the Chaitanya school as he is of major importance in the biographies of Chaitanya; he appears to have been anterior to and highly respected by Chaitanya, who, according to the date given in this text, was eight years younger than Shri Vallabhacharya. Madhavendra has been discussed by A.W. Entwistle in his encyclopaedic *Braj: Centre of Krishna Pilgrimage*. Those works should also be looked at in order to arrive at some “historical” account of this great bhakta. For a great bhakta he, indeed, must have been, whether seen from the viewpoint of Pushti Marga or of the Gaudiyas (Chaitanya school). His connection with Shri Nathji is never questioned; only how he



was connected and from what point in the story he was connected are given variously in these sources.

Finally, to the general reader, who, by interest or curiosity, has come to pick up this book, I mention that this work is a spiritual exercise and has been written in the original for an audience of “the faithful”. Moreover, with just such an audience in mind, its translation was undertaken. Therefore, you are walking on ground that is new to you. Enjoy the tales and try to ascertain their meaning, which is definitely on the mystical side.

With these few *caveats*, then, I leave the readers, of whatever persuasion, to peruse the text and make their own findings. I hope that our humble efforts will be of service to them all.

Asim Krishna Das

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This book is dedicated to

Dr. Asim Krishna Das.

(July 6, 1944 - August 23, 1997)

He was an American born Krishna bhakta sadhu who lived in Vraja for over 25 years. He was not only an editor for this publication but was also my closest friend. He worked tirelessly on reviewing the final drafts of the text and left his body a few days after the book was printed. The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji was his final seva. He is fondly remembered.

—Shyamdas

It is with great joy that I perceive that the unthinkable and causeless Grace of Shri Nath ji is being showered on English-speaking Vaishnavas. It has taken the form of an account in English of the blissful deeds which have been performed by Shri Nath ji, Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya, Shri Vitthalnath ji and the following lineage holders.

I congratulate Shyamdas and those who have undertaken this project. Obviously, Shri Nath ji is pleased to shower His Grace upon them, to allow them to think of His Lilas. And I am pleased for all those who will now come to know of His Blissful deeds in English through this book.

With love compliments
of divine natures.

Jai—Shriji...!

Rajiv Goswami

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INTRODUCTION

A cow from Shri Krishna's herd climbs the Govardhan Hill and drops her milk on top of a black arm that has mysteriously appeared from the top of the hill. Every afternoon, she lags behind the rest of the herd to perform her ritual over the protruding arm. Unaware of her devotion, her owner begins to wonder why there is a decrease in the amount of her milk. One day he follows her and discovers her secret rite with Shri Nathji. The year is 1409 and Shri Nathji's appearance upon the hill seizes the attention of the local Braja Vasis, the residents of Braja. They are amazed that whatever they desire is given. They only need to pray to the raised arm.

The story of Shri Nathji presented here is the amazing history of His worship, travels and pastimes, known as lilas. Shri Nathji's manifestation and the subsequent developments were originally revealed by Shri Gokulnathji, the grandson of Shri Mahaprabhuji Vallabhacharya, in Braja Bhasa, the language spoken in the Vrindavan region. Shri Vallabhacharya appeared in India in the year 1479, on the same day that Shri Nathji's face appeared from the hill. Shri Nathji stayed on the Govardhan Hill as long as Shri Mahaprabhu, his son, Shri Gusainji, and his seven sons lived on the earth. Shri Gokulnathji was Shri Gusainji's illustrious fourth son; he composed an ocean of devotional literature, mostly in Sanskrit and Braja Bhasa. The portion of this text that reveals Shri Nathji's travels from the Govardhan Hill to Mevar all occurred after the lifetime of Shri Gokulnathji. These later accounts of Shri Nathji were penned by an anonymous author. In India, it is common for artists to leave their paintings unsigned and for authors to attribute their writings to the pen of other great men.



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

These accounts first captivated my mind in the 1970's, when I lived at the Govardhan Hill. Everyday, for nearly eight years, I gazed upon Shri Nathji's temple as it rested like a celestial fortress on top of the hill. Just to the north of His temple, a pile of stones mark the place of His first appearance. All of this inspired me to find a copy of Shri Nathji's appearance story. When it found its way into my hands and I read the original Braja Bhasa text, I became enthralled by the delightful accounts of Shri Nathji.

The lila of Shri Nathji is a subtle mixture of the spiritual and material worlds. Wherever Shri Nathji appears, false distinctions are removed. This is the non-dualist vision of Shri Mahaprabhuji Vallabhacharya, who saw everything as Krishna and nothing but Krishna. He explained in words what Shri Nathji manifested in form. The wisdom that is required to enter into the realm of Shri Nathji is supplied by Shri Mahaprabhuji, the incarnation of Shri Nathji's face. Who could describe His lila better than His main partner, Shri Mahaprabhuji, who, on one level, is an Acharya who empowers the devotional heart, while on the divine level, is Shri Svaminiji, Shri Krishna's consort? The combination of a playful God and an insightful guru, who illuminates the arena with lightning bolts of vedantic wisdom, has allowed the play to begin.

If divinity is not felt in the world, it becomes a place to either exploit or renounce. Shri Nathji's lila shows a third way, that is neither to wantonly enjoy nor pridefully renounce. For the devotional souls, *bhaktas*, Shri Nathji is not a stone image, but a living divinity Who interacts and plays with His bhaktas. Sometimes He leaves His temple to play chess with a bhakta, and other times He remains awake the entire night to listen to a bhakta's music. Through His power of grace, Shri Nathji descended into the world of His bhaktas and made it divine. Vallabhacharya speaks of the blessed bhakta's aspirations in his *Subodhini* in the words of Krishna's beloved:

The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji



We experience Krishna with our eyes;
we feel Him through all of our senses.
Hari is the desire, the festival of our hearts.
To behold Krishna's form is the ultimate reward.
To have conversations with God,
to behold Him,
to mingle with and embrace Him,
to please Him, to serve Him, to touch Him,
to taste the nectar of His lips,
is what we live for.
We need to thoroughly enjoy Hari
until every hair on our bodies stands erect with bliss.

The lila of Shri Nathji shows the unspoken of, joyful approach. Some say that God cannot be seen. Others say that no one can live after seeing His face. The bhaktas of Shri Nathji have not only seen His face, but some have embraced Him and even tasted the nectar of His lips. The rules have changed: Shri Nathji is unrestricted; He can do, not do, or do what is neither doing or not doing. Shri Nathji empowers souls with grace and this enables them to withstand the force of His love.

When God displays His lawful power, attainment is gained by following His words. When His power of grace is present, accomplishment is through His blissful form. Shri Nathji is a grace-filled divinity, the balanced abode of contradictions. He is a child, yet supports the world. He wants flowers from a lotus pond and, at the same time, is the pond and the lotus. Shri Krishna is everything, yet distinct: playful, yet for those who consider Him to be totally full, total void, or any combination of the two, so He becomes. Although immovable, He plays according to the wishes of His bhaktas.

The story of Shri Nathji's lila is a journey towards understanding Eastern theism. It has the ability to embrace all aspects of divinity, both personal and abstract. He is beyond the



understanding of the Creator, the god Brahma, yet will appear and dance for a glass of butter-milk. Shri Nathji has the form of *ras*, the manifestation of bliss; His every ornament expresses a total view. He is the perfect combination of Vedant philosophy and poetry, of insight and dance, of form and formlessness, and of world and heaven. He is beyond all qualities, yet embodies every virtue. His appearance on the Govardhan Hill allows Him the opportunity to express His most refined creation and to show how graceful it is. When His presence charges the world with sacredness, there is no longer a need to discard it in the process of enlightenment.

When the Gopis, the milkmaids of Braja, heard the song of Shri Krishna's flute, many of them left their homes and went to meet Him in the forest. Others, who could not leave their homes because they were stopped by their husbands, sat down and meditated upon Him in their hearts and left their material forms upon attaining Him. Shri Mahaprabhuji explains that even though they put an end to their karmas and attained liberation, they were not as blessed as those who were able to engage in dalliance with Hari here in the world. The blessed Svaminis who were able to bring Hari into their world speak out in the *Bhagavata Purana*:

O friends, we know the reward of imbibing the sound of Balaram's and Krishna's flutes as They herd their cows through Vrindavan forests. It is the fruit of having eyes. It is the gift of the senses. Having experienced this, we now have no use for any other enlightenment or liberation.

To behold Shri Nathji with the eyes or, better yet, with all the senses, is the bhakta's enlightenment. It was with this view in mind that Shri Nathji appeared from the hill. Shri Mahaprabhuji explains that those who have appeared from Shri Nathji's mind wander according to their limited view. Others, who have manifested from His speech, try to locate God through His words.



Those who have come forth from His bliss form appear in this world to join in His lila. They are the grace-filled ones and surround Shri Nathji.

Krishna decided to appear from the depths of the Govardhan Hill as Shri Nathji in the form of a five-foot tall stone image that was not chiselled by any human hand. He came to life on the Govardhan Hill for His special devotees. During the times of Shri Vallabhacharya and Shri Gusainji, Shri Nathji actually came to play with the bhaktas. Their exchanges created an unique history that is eternal and appears in the world beyond the effects of time and karma. It arises where the ultimate Brahman expresses Brahman according to the devotion of His bhaktas. In this remarkable locus, Shri Nathji celebrates the mutual enjoyment which occurs between *Bhagavan*, God Himself, and the bhaktas. A bit of that play is spread throughout these pages.

Submersion into the ocean of *ras* comes from *darshan*, the direct vision of divinity. *Darshan* is part of the devotional process. Sages have spoken of darshan in four different ways. Hari can be experienced in the heart, through a celestial voice, in a dream, or directly before you. When Shri Nathji appeared during the times of Shri Mahaprabhuji, He appeared to many bhaktas in His most direct and rare fashion: right before them. The type of devotion that arises from this holds the wisdom that can separate not only milk from water, but more importantly, poison from nectar. After a darshan, if one is not seized by pride of attainment, a sensitive and overwhelming love for Hari arises. This is called *bhakti* or devotion and liberation is given along the way to entrance into the realm of Hari, the lila locus.

In the *Bhagavadgita*, when Krishna showed Arjuna His expansive universal form, Arjuna could not sustain the intensity of the darshan. His hairs stood on end and he prayed to have the darshan withdrawn. Shri Nathji's darshans are never so awesome; they are sweet.



The nectar-form of Shri Nathji appeared to a number of bhaktas during the times of Shri Mahaprabhuji and Shri Gusainji. Many other remarkable meetings have been disclosed in the accounts of Shri Mahaprabhuji's and Shri Gusainji's disciples. By the time Shri Nathji decided to move to Mevar, to fulfill the wish of one of His bhaktas, the only person Shri Nathji freely conversed with was an elderly woman by the name of Gangabai. She is a central figure in this story and is Shri Nathji's voice for the rest of the world. Every time Shri Nathji's chariot gets stuck, she comes to the rescue with a direct message from Shri Krishna Himself.

Although God almost never appears personally before the bhakta in this present age of struggle, there are some bhaktas like Gangabai who break the mould. The bhakta poet Nandadas explains:

In three other eras, the Lord appears before the bhakta,
But not in this age of struggle.
So, Rup Manjari had to met Krishna in a dream.
What one desires day and night, He bequeaths...
Even if the scriptures say He is most unattainable,
From pure love one can come
Exceedingly close to God.
This union is not found in talking
But in undertaking.
A lamp shines not by discussion
But only when it is lit.

The inner Shri Nathji appears when the light of bhakti is lit and sets the bhakta's world aflame with devotion. The desire to meet Shri Nathji expands until even Shri Nathji cannot contain it. Then He appears from the bhakta's joyful heart in front of him or her. This is direct darshan. The brilliance of bhakti illuminates the heart and creates a clear inward recognition that overflows into the outside world.



What makes the worship of Shri Nathji unique is that it evolved from His bhaktas' inner experience and then manifested into a sacred world wherein Shri Nathji became adored. The movement between the inward and outward experience of Shri Nathji reveals the two-fold nature of "ras", Shri Nathji's loving nectar. His nectarine mood of love embraces union and separation. This movement between union and separation supports, nourishes and heightens the ras, the elixir of devotion. Shri Nathji is the Lord of ras. Shri Mahaprabhuji describes His form thus:

His lips are sweet,
His face is sweet,
His eyes are sweet,
His heart is sweet.

One may argue that God needs nothing and that His personality is created by the desires of the bhaktas. They make Him full and complete His nature. When God is lawful, the soul falls under His control, but when He becomes grace-filled, He falls under the domination of the bhakta's devotion. Shri Nathji's bhakta, Kumbhandas, was a devotee of grace. He was so attached to Shri Nathji that he would never even look at another form of Krishna. One night, he was tricked into leaving the area of Shri Nathji's temple and was led to the town of Gokul, where the image of child Krishna resided. As the sun rose, he saw Gokul before him and, realizing he was far away from his beloved Shri Nathji, he ran back to Shri Nathji's temple, some fifteen miles away. Although Shri Nathji usually wakes up at 5 a.m., on that day, because Kumbhandas was not there to sing for Him, He did not wake until His bhakta returned, several hours after sunrise.

We also see how Shri Nathji, on more than one occasion, stops His chariot until some desire, sometimes rather childish, is fulfilled. Once, Shri Nathji refused to move until the Braja Vasis insulted Him. At another point during His adventures, He brought His chariot to a stop and said that He would not move until



someone brought Him lotuses from a nearby pond. In the *Gita*, Krishna as *Jagadguru* (teacher of the world) explains that He corresponds to the way people worship Him. This keeps Shri Nathji in a continual process of becoming. He is filled with magical virtues and the bhaktas cause Him to bring forth His different manifestations according to their own personal sentiments of devotion, their "bhava".

Limitation does not diminish Shri Nathji's glory. It is through limitations that anything of value is actually attained. In yoga there is no attainment without one-pointed focus. To limit in the devotional sense means to contain Krishna within the walls of your home and within your heart. Limitation means to make Krishna your own. All-pervasive Krishna never really appears or moves. The bhakta Dayaram expresses this grace-filled view,

Beloved of all life, I humbly request:
Let me savour the nectar of devotion.
Give Your knowledge to those
Who follow the path of emancipation.
I have no interest...
O Lord, liberation never even enters the minds
Of Your special servants.
With delight I daily gaze at You, Krishna.
The great joy that wells from You within my heart
Could never arise from being
In absolute unity with You
Where...the pleasures of a married woman
Remain totally unknown,
Even in a dream.

Goswamy Shyam comments on this poem:

Shri Mahaprabhuji teaches that this entire universe is a sport, a play of Bhagavan, the Super Soul. We are all conscious beings and are able to



eloquently express the nature of Krishna's lila. We can also act perfectly within His lila setting while playing our own individual roles. Hari has filled us with a sense of me and mine for the purpose of being able to carry out our own activities and also to express our roles within His lila. The greatest boon of life is to have the *lila bhava* fill our actions, activities, understanding and love. There is no greater curse than if we do not vibrate with that *lila bhava*.

Our life situations, *dharma*, practice and lifestyle, as well as our sense of me and mine can either be healthy or harmful to our spiritual development. Worldly attachment is like mud and devotion is like the lotus. Our awareness of Pushti is the dawn that makes the lotus blossom within the mud of the world. The worldly wanderer is the one who only enjoys the mud around the lotus... If you forget God and start to simply enjoy the world, that can never be devotion. To just accept that God is everywhere and relax with that idea is not ideal either. You must relish creation whether you are playing, eating, sleeping or waking. It should all be filled with Krishna. This is the way of the Braja Bhaktas and is the height of Pushti devotion.

When the non-differentiated view that embraces Krishna as everything is attained, then the position of Shri Nathji can be deciphered; otherwise, there is a risk of confusing Shri Nathji with a mere lifeless idol. A key to understanding Shri Nathji's appearance is to grasp the relationship between the world, Brahman, Which is all-pervasive and effulgent, and the blissful, personal Krishna. The brilliance of Shri Mahaprabhuji's teaching is seen in the way which he brings unity into all realms. He is the



incarnation of fire and fire is speech. It is through words that Shri Mahaprabhuji ties together the three-fold nature of world, Brahman and Shri Nathji. He uses the Ganges river to demonstrate his point. In Shri Mahaprabhuji's words:

According to the Vedas, Akshara Brahman, the undifferentiated Brahman, becomes the world. Understand Akshara Brahman in terms of the two forms of the Ganga river. One form of the Ganga is water while the other form is a majestic one. Ganga's majestic aspect grants liberation to those who worship her according to scriptural injunction. Now understand Akshara Brahman in a similar way. In rare instances, a bhakta can see the Goddess' form due to the water's special qualities. That blessed one perceives the river and the Goddess as one. This exalted perception is uncommon except for those who have an extraordinary desire for the water. This realization is known from both scripture and experience. Equate the Ganga waters with this world. Then liken her spiritual powers of granting enjoyment and liberation to the peerless Akshara Brahman. Finally, understand that the Ganga Goddess is like Krishna.

Shri Mahaprabhuji stresses that, for the development of devotion, you need a pure view that embraces a oneness between the material world and the source of the world, what he calls Akshara Brahman. Akshara Brahman is that glorious Brahman, devoid of name and form, from which all of this came to be. Akshara Brahman is simultaneously full and void. The real mystery is: what is the form of the Deity of Akshara Brahman? Going back to the example of the Ganga, Shri Mahaprabhuji explains that the Goddess Ganga can be seen on her banks by the bhakta



who not only understands that the Ganga waters seasonally swell and shrink, but who can also understand the nature of Ganga as a holy place. By knowing her as a holy place and feeling her unseen, divine attributes, the rare opportunity to come face to face with Ganga as a Goddess arises. This appearance is due to devotion. Devotion allows the blessed bhakta to understand the mystery of the Ganga water. Similarly, from the banks of the world, the blessed bhaktas understand Krishna as this material manifestation with their senses. They see Him as undifferentiated through their wisdom and through their bhakti as Krishna, Shri Nathji Himself. This allows them entrance into His lila. It makes them "jivan muktas": living beings who are liberated.

Many claim that Akshara Brahman can have no Deity form and that all form arises from a disturbance in what is undifferentiated. They go on to conclude that final purity is achieved in absolute oneness. However, the vedic mind embraces Divinity in every manifestation. It knows God as personal and nirguna (beyond material qualities). God is allowed to play everywhere and is never demoted. He plays with those who understand His three-fold nature of world, Akshara Brahman and Krishna. The festival truly begins when the bhakta embraces the ecstatic merging of knowing and feeling; then the mind and heart travel the same path. Then there is humble knowledge of and unconditional love for the Deity. When the bhava becomes intense, it causes the hue of Krishna to appear like a rain-filled cloud ready to burst upon the bhakta's world.

This all brings us back to Shri Nathji's raised arm that appeared to a cow in the year 1409. Shri Nathji's favorite game is *lila*, the play in which bliss is ever-increasing and which is devoid of fatigue. It is His product, program and pleasure. It arises from His desire to fully experience Himself. His process of expansion admits that it cannot be done alone. From the unfolding of His indistinguishable, omnipresent and almost perfectly blissful,



impersonal self comes creation. The lila players who take part in creation live in the world, yet are witnesses. They are waiting for Shri Nathji to return from the forest with His cows at dusk. Their hearts overflow with a rare passion for Him.

Shri Nathji appeared on the Govardhan Hill to uplift all, while Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya appeared to establish a lila connection for the *pushti* or lila souls. The *seva* of Shri Nathji established by Shri Mahaprabhuji was later embellished by his son, Shri Vitthalnathji, also known as Shri Gusainji. This elaborate tradition of adoration is still alive today. Millions of people come to visit Shri Nathji. They crowd His chambers, which literally become an ocean of people. When you enter into these waters, you flow with the tide of bhaktas as they push their way in and out of the darshan area. Often you can only stay before Shri Nathji as long as the darshan flow allows. Suddenly you are pushed out of the arena while the crowd chants, "Girirajadharana ki jai", "Glories to the One Who holds up the Govardhan Hill."

Today, Shri Nathji lives in Nathdwara, near Udaipur in Rajasthan. The town is totally centered around Him. Shri Nathji's full name is Shri Govardhan Nathji. Tradition tells us not to use the name of our guru, wife, husband, close friend or personal Deity. For this reason, Shri Govardhan Nathji is called Shri Nathji.

Shri Nathji, Who used to make the trip from the Govardhan Hill to Rajasthan to play with His bhakta Ajaba, now goes from Rajasthan back to His beloved Govardhan Hill daily. His bhaktas feel that He spends the night there in the caves and groves around the mount. His presence there is honored every night with His ornamentation at Mukharvinda, just in front of Shri Mahaprabhuji's *baithak* in Jatipura. After the evening *arati* lights are waved, the ornamentation is removed and Shri Nathji disappears into the hill. All that remains is the Govardhan stone upon which the ornamentation and form of Shri Nathji was presented.



Shri Nathji's worship is eightfold. He is awakened, adorned, honored as a cow lad and then offered lunch. In the afternoon, He is called for the afternoon darshan of Utthapan and then offered fruit. Afterwards, Shri Nathji returns from the forest at "sandhya arati" and then prepares for His evening lilas.

Shri Nathji's account reads like a Purana, a divine epic of Indian history, filled with accounts that could only happen in devotional realms. The language in both the original Braja Bhasa and my translation is simple, but what is revealed in the accounts is exalted. It occurs above the realm of liberation. We are reading about the lilas, the divine sports of the Blessed Lord, Who has decided to play with His bhaktas here upon the earth. What need is there to go to any celestial or eternal realm when Shri Nathji has agreed to grace His bhaktas right here? His play on earth is the supreme reward. As revealed in the text, Shri Nathji is sweet and simple.

The beauty of Shri Nathji is that He likes to be treated naturally. He is not a God that resides on high, but a young lad Who rushes back to the temple when He hears the beckoning call of the conch. Once, in His haste to return to His temple on time, a piece of His garment got caught on a tree. When Shri Gusainji came to know how the garment got torn, he instructed the temple attendants not to open the temple doors immediately after the conch was blown. He explained that they needed to wait a few minutes so that Shri Nathji could leisurely make His way back to the temple.

The development of *seva*, the devotional worship of Shri Nathji, is a continuous process that revolves in the minds and hearts of the His bhaktas. Shri Nathji plays with His bhaktas. First He allows them an awareness of His divinity and then gifts them an awareness of their personal relationship with Him. When this relationship matures into a lila alliance, then Shri Krishna appears directly before them. The accounts of Shri Nathji and His bhaktas



define a space where devotional creation can come to life; they reveal to us a very personal devotional development.

With this bhava I present my translation of Shri Nathji's appearance story.

SHRI NATHJI'S APPEARANCE STORY

Now will begin the story of Shri Nathji's appearance. These are the episodes that occurred on this earth and were told by Shri Gokulnathji, the grandson of Shri Vallabhacharya, for the upliftment of people.

Shri Nathji forever resides in a cave on the Govardhan Hill. All these episodes occur within the eternal lila where He is accompanied by His many bhaktas. Shri Mahaprabhuji also resides there, continually engaged in Shri Nathji's seva. Shri Krishna commanded Shri Mahaprabhuji to appear upon the earth to uplift divine souls. When Shri Mahaprabhuji appeared upon the earth, his most beloved, Shri Nathji, also appeared in Braja and not only with His lila partners, but with all the necessary items for lila. This is all revealed in the Giriraja Khanda of the *Garga Samhita*. There it says:

The good people will talk about Shri Nathji, Who is also called Deva Daman, the One Who conquers the gods. O king, Shri Nathji is always engaged in lila on the Govardhan Hill. Whoever beholds Shri Nathji with their eyes becomes perfected. There are four Naths in the four corners of India. They are Jagannath, Ranganath, Dwarkanath and Badrinath. In the middle of Them all is Shri Nathji. O king, these five Naths are the best of the gods in the pure land of India. They are the adorned pillars of true dharma and They are intent upon carrying



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

one across the sufferings of the world. Those who have Their darshan become like Nara-Narayan. Those who have had the darshan of the four Naths, but not the darshan of Shri Nathji, have not yet had a fruitful pilgrimage. The person who does see Shri Nathji, however, receives the fruits of having made a pilgrimage to the other four Naths.

THE APPEARANCE OF A RAISED ARM

In the year 1409 during the month of Shravana, on the third day of the dark half of the month, the left arm of Shri Govardhananathji, Who is also known as Shri Nathji, appeared. At that time the earth was very blessed.

One day a cow herder, a resident of Braja, climbed the Govardhan Hill in pursuit of one of his cows. It was during the year 1409, on the fifth day of the bright half of the month of Shraavan that the herder came across Shri Nathji's raised left arm manifesting from the top of the Govardhan Hill. For the next sixteen days, no one else had the sight of Shri Nathji's raised hand. Then the herder realized that he had never seen such an amazing thing on top of the Govardhan Hill. He decided to tell ten or fifteen of the local people about it. He brought them up on the Govardhan Hill and showed them the raised arm coming out of the mountain. They also were amazed and concluded that it must be the manifestation of some god upon the hill. Among them was a senior Braja Vasi, who said, "That raised arm is the same one that Krishna used to hold up the Govardhan Hill for seven days while He was protecting the people of Braja from Indra's rains."

He explained that, after Krishna lowered the Govardhan Hill, the Braja Vasis worshipped Shri Krishna's left arm that had held up the hill and now that same arm had manifested before them. He added, "He is standing in a cave in the Govardhan Hill and has decided to give us the darshan of His raised left arm. Don't pull



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

Him up out of His cave. He will fully appear at His Own will. Until that time, have the darshan of His raised arm."

After hearing this, the Braja Vasis called for some milk, washed the arm and worshipped it with rice, flowers, sandalpaste and Tulsi. They brought curds and fruits and offered them to Shri Nathji's raised arm. The *darshan*, the sight of Shri Nathji's arm, occurred on Naga Panchami, the fifth day during the bright half of the month of Shraavan. For this reason, every year on every Naga Panchami, ten to twenty thousand Braja Vasis gathered around Shri Nathji's arm on top of the Govardhan Hill. Those who desired something worshipped the raised arm with a milk bath and their wishes would be fulfilled. Shri Nathji's raised arm became famous all over Braja. The arm had the power to grant wishes. Those who had lost a cow, or were childless, or diseased, or even those who were not getting enough milk and curds from their cows, all had their desires fulfilled. There were so many incidents recorded of Shri Nathji's arm fulfilling the wishes of those who worshipped Him, that people continued to worship His arm in this way until 1478.

THE APPEARANCE OF SHRI KRISHNA'S FACE

In the year 1478, on the eleventh day of the dark half of the month of Vaishakha, on a Thursday during the middle of the day, Shri Nathji's face appeared from the mountain. At that exact moment, Shrimad Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya appeared in a ring of fire in Champaran. During this same period, all of Krishna's friends who joined His incarnation were born in Braja in the various homes of the local residents. They appeared so that Krishna could play with them.

THE STORY OF SHRI NATHJI DRINKING MILK

Manikchand and Saddu Pande resided in the town of Anyor by the Govardhan Hill. They had one thousand cows and one of



their cows was a direct descendant from the herd of Nanda Baba, Shri Krishna's father. That cow's name was Dhumar. All day she would graze with the other cows but, at the end of the afternoon, she would fall behind the rest of the herd for an hour and wander on top of the Govardhan Hill. There she would stand above Shri Nathji and pour her milk over Him. In this fashion Shri Nathji would lovingly partake of her milk. She would also wander and offer her milk to Shri Nathji at sunrise. Dhumar continued to give Shri Nathji her milk for six months without anyone knowing about it. One day, Manika Chanda, Dhanda and Saddu Pande noticed that Dhumar was not giving very much milk and decided to follow her. When they saw her divine activities with Shri Nathji, they bowed their heads low to the ground.

SADDU PANDE IS GIVEN A DIRECT COMMAND

Saddu Pande had the direct darshan of Shri Nathji, Who told him, "I live on top of the Govardhan Hill. My name is Devadaman. During other lilas I have also been called Indradaman, Devadaman and Nagadaman. These are My three names. For seven days I protected the Braja Vasis from Indra's rains and removed Indra's pride. From that incident, I received the name Indra Daman. My name is also Naga Daman. Naga refers to the intoxicated elephant Kuvalaya that I defeated in Mathura. I master the inebriated minds of the bhaktas and put them in the palm of the hand that I rest on My right hip. For these reasons My name is Naga Daman. On My lotus feet there is also an image of the barley grass which refers to the 'Ankush', the prod without which the elephant cannot be controlled.

"My other name is Deva Daman, meaning that I have conquered all of the gods. Shri Krishna has given teachings in the eight realms to all the divinities such as Indra, Kubera, Chandra, Vayu, Mrityu, Yama, Agni, Shiva, and Kama. These are the main deities and I have conquered all of them. For this reason My name



is Deva Daman, the 'Conqueror of the gods'. I disciplined Indra when I held up the Govardhan Hill and curbed his pride. I also gave teachings to Indra when I stole the celestial tree from his garden. Kuber received teaching from me when I killed Shankhachuda, gave the treasure to Kuber, and told him to protect his wealth. Shiva was conquered in the story of Usha and Brahma was conquered in the lila where I took on as many forms as there were cows and cowlads that he had removed from Braja. Varuna was defeated by Me when I saved Nanda Baba from his clutches. I defeated Mrityu by returning Devaki's six deceased children and defeated Yama by returning My guru's children. By holding up the Govardhan Hill, I defeated Vayu when he joined with Indra to shower torrents upon Braja. At that time there was great wind and rain, but I stopped them and provided protection to the Braja Vasis. I defeated the moon when I manifested My mind as the moon during the *rasa lila*. I defeated Kamadeva, the god of love, in the *rasa lila* celebration when I danced with the Gopis. In this way, I have defeated all of the devas and that is why My name is Devadaman."

In this way Shri Nathji appeared and revealed everything to Saddu Pande. He continued, "I daily drink the milk from your cow, Dhumar. As of today, I want milk and curds from that cow twice a day."

Saddu Pande then bowed before Shri Nathji and replied, "It will be done."

SADDU PANDE RETURNS HOME AND TELLS OF SHRI NATHJI

After listening to Shri Nathji, Saddu Pande came down from the hill and returned to Anyor where he told his wife, Bhavai, and his daughter, Naro, all that Shri Nathji had told him, explaining, "Go and give Shri Nathji some milk to drink twice a day."



From that day on, Naro and Bhavai would daily climb the hill and offer milk to Shri Nathji.

SHRI NATHJI TELLS OF A COW COMING TO THE COWPEN

Some days later, the milk from the cow that was a descendant from Krishna's herd of cows dried up. When Saddu Pande delivered some milk from another cow to Shri Nathji, Shri Nathji instructed him, "I will only take milk from a cow that descends from Krishna's herd. Tomorrow, a cow from Krishna's herd will wander into your cowpen. Until my other cow starts to give milk again, I will daily enjoy the milk and curds from that new cow."

DHARMADAS RECEIVES THE COMMAND TO PUT HIS COW IN SADDU PANDE'S PEN

Dharmadas, a Braja Vasi, lived nearby in the town of Yamanavatou and was a good bhakta. He was the uncle of the Astha Chhap poet and singer Kumbhandas and was a disciple of Chaturanga. He had several cows and one of them descended from Shri Krishna's herd. One day, that cow became separated from the other cows and wandered to the top of the Govardhan Hill and poured her milk over Shri Nathji's lotus face. When she lingered there and did not return home, the cow's owner, Dharmadas, became concerned and went out to look for her with Kumbhandas. Kumbhandas was only ten years old at the time. They went looking for the cow on top of the Govardhan Hill and, after searching for some time, they found her by Shri Nathji. When they tried to take her home, even after much coaxing, she would not budge. Then Shri Nathji appeared to them in living form and said, "Put this cow in Saddu Pande's cowpen. I want to drink her milk. She is from My herd of cows."



Then Shri Nathji told Kumbhandas directly, "O Kumbhandas, come here and play with Me every day."

Hearing Shri Nathji's sweet words, both Kumbhandas and Dharmadas fell unconscious. After they arose, they circled Shri Nathji and bowed before Him. They followed Shri Nathji's wishes and put that cow into Saddu Pande's cowpen and then returned home.

From that day on, Kumbhandas went to play with Shri Nathji every day.

FOUR POTENCIES APPEAR TO PROTECT SHRI NATHJI

To protect Shri Nathji, four divine potencies appeared. The protective deity Sankarshan appeared from the Sankarshan Lake, while from the Govinda Lake, the deity Govinda appeared. From the Dan Ghati hill, Shri Danirayji appeared and from the Shri Lake, Shri Haridevaji appeared. These four gods are Krishna's four potencies, Sankarshan, Vasudeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. They always protect Shri Nathji and are worshipped by bhaktas from other lineages.

In the center of these four protective deities resides Purushottam, Who has appeared as Shri Nathji. For Shri Nathji's seva, Krishna appeared as Shri Mahaprabhuji. Only Purushottam can know Purushottam. In the tenth chapter of the *Gita* it is said, "Neither gods nor demons can comprehend Your manifestation. You Yourself know Yourself through Yourself."



SHRI NATHJI APPEARS TO SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI IN JHARAKANDA AND TELLS HIM TO ESTABLISH HIS WORSHIP

In the year 1493, on the eleventh day during the bright half of the month of Phalgun, on a Thursday, Shri Nathji commanded Shri Mahaprabhuji, "I have appeared as Shri Nathji in a cave on the Govardhan Hill. You know that the Braja Vasis have seen Me there. I am thinking of appearing in My complete form, but I am waiting for you. Quickly come here and perform My seva. There are some souls here in Braja that are left over from My Krishna avatar. Take them in your shelter, then I will agree to play with them. I will meet you on top of the Govardhan Hill."

SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI GOES TO BRAJA AND REMOVES THE SPELL AT VISHRANTI GHAT

After hearing Shri Nathji's command, Shri Mahaprabhuji set out from Jharakanda to Braja. He first stopped at Mathura where he stayed at Ujagar Choube's house. When Shri Mahaprabhuji was going to Vishranti Ghat to take his bath, Ujagar Choube and other people informed him that for the past five days there were serious disturbances at the Vishranti Ghat. When Shri Mahaprabhuji asked what the problem was, they explained to him, "The emperor's minister, Rustamalli, came to Mathura and was ridiculed by the local Coube Brahmans. He became angry and returned to Delhi where he had a charm prepared. He attached the charm to a gate by the Vishranti Ghat where a Muslim guard sits. Any Hindu who passes under the gate would lose the tuft of hair that Hindus keep on top of their heads and immediately grow a Muslim beard. The fear of that charm has stopped all Hindus from bathing there for the past two days."

Hearing this, Shri Mahaprabhuji said, "It is terrible that people who go to this holy place are driven away by that charm. I will go



to Vishranti Ghat and that charm will not affect me. Anyone who joins me now for a bath in the Yamuna and worship at the Vishranti Ghat will not be affected either."

After Shri Mahaprabhuji had finished bathing in the Yamuna, the charm began to work again. Ujagar Choube and the others approached Shri Mahaprabhuji saying, "Please do something to remove this charm. It brings us great distress."

Shri Mahaprabhuji became filled with compassion and created a *yantra* spell on a piece of paper and told his disciples Vasudevadas and Krishnadas to go to Delhi. He told them to attach the yantra to the main gate in Delhi and to sit there. He said that the emperor himself would call them and everything would be resolved. Both disciples proceeded to Delhi and after the spell was attached, any Muslim who walked under the arch lost his beard and suddenly grew a tuft of hair, like a Hindu, on his head. The emperor, Sikandar Lodi, hearing of the troublesome spell that two Hindu renunciates had established in Delhi, summoned them to his court.

There Vasudevadas and Krishnadas told him, "Both Hindus and Muslims are your citizens. For the past seven days your minister, Rustamalli, has been harassing the Hindus of Mathura with his spell. Seeing the pain of the people there, my guru sent us both to Delhi."

After hearing their story, the emperor immediately summoned Rustamalli. After asking him about everything, the emperor scolded the minister, "You started all of this. Didn't you think about what reaction your spell would create? Now see with your own eyes. Quickly remove your spell from Mathura. Don't be so intimidated by petty taunts."

After giving his order to Rustamalli, the emperor told Vasudevadas and Krishnadas, "After the Mathura spell is removed, you remove your spell and quickly leave this place. Convey my respect to your guru."



In this way, the Mathura spell was removed. From Mathura, Shri Mahaprabhuji proceeded to the Govardhan Hill.

SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI GOES TO THE GOVARDHAN HILL AND LOOKS FOR THE PLACE WHERE SHRI NATHJI APPEARED

Shri Mahaprabhuji then proceeded to the Govardhan Hill with all of his disciples and sat there under a porch in front of Saddu Pande's house. Many Braja Vasis came to see him and thought, "He is a great soul. A human being cannot be so resplendent."

When Saddu Pande arrived, he offered Shri Mahaprabhuji something to eat.

Then Krishnadas explained, "Shri Mahaprabhuji only accepts things from his disciples."

At that moment, Shri Nathji called from the Govardhan Hill and Shri Mahaprabhuji overheard Him say, "O Naro, bring Me some milk."

Naro replied, "Today we have a guest."

Shri Nathji replied, "Good for your guest, but could you bring Me My milk please?"

Naro replied, "I am bringing it right now."

She then brought Shri Nathji His bowl of milk. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked his disciple Damala, "Did you hear anything?"

Damala replied, "I heard something but I could not fully understand."

Then Shri Mahaprabhuji explained, "The voice I heard in Jharakanda, that told me to come here, is the same voice I just heard. Shri Nathji has appeared here. We will go to look for Him in the morning."



Naro came down from the hill after having given Shri Nathji some milk. Seeing her, Shri Mahaprabhuji asked, "Is there any milk left in that bowl?"

Naro replied, "Maharaj, we have a lot of milk in the house. If you need some, take as much as you like."

Shri Mahaprabhuji then explained, "I am not interested in any other milk, just what is in that bowl."

Saddu Pande then requested to become a disciple. After Mahaprabhuji initiated him with Krishna mantra, he accepted Saddu Pande's offerings. Later that evening, Saddu Pande, Manikchanda and all the local people of Braja came before Shri Mahaprabhuji, bowed to him and sat down. Shri Mahaprabhuji asked them, "How did Shri Nathji appear here?"

Saddu Pande then spoke, "Maharaj, you already know everything. Why are you asking us?"

When Shri Mahaprabhuji asked him again about Shri Nathji, Saddu Pande told him all about Shri Nathji's appearance and Shri Mahaprabhuji's heart became filled with joy.

SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI GOES TO THE GOVARDHAN HILL AND MEETS SHRI NATHJI

On the following day, Shri Mahaprabhuji was very joyful and climbed up the Govardhan Hill with all of his disciples. Shri Nathji suddenly appeared before them and blissfully greeted Shri Mahaprabhuji with a warm embrace. Shri Gopaldas sings of the encounter: "Shri Nathji, the holder of the Govardhan Hill, came blissfully before Shri Mahaprabhuji."



**SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI FOLLOWS SHRI NATHJI'S
COMMAND AND ESTABLISHES THE TEMPLE;
AFTER ARRANGING FOR THE WORSHIP, HE
CONTINUES ON HIS PILGRIMAGE**

Shri Mahaprabhuji followed Shri Nathji's command to establish His temple and daily worship. Truly, without *seva*, there is no entrance into the Path of Grace. So, Shri Mahaprabhuji made a temple and had Shri Nathji established there on the Govardhan Hill. Nearby, next to the Apsara Lake, there is a cave where the accomplished bhakta Ramdas lived. Shri Mahaprabhuji went there and Ramdas became Shri Mahaprabhuji's disciple. The guru told him, "Perform Shri Nathji's *seva*."

Ramdas replied, "I don't know anything about *seva*. I have never done it."

Shri Mahaprabhuji knew the wish of Shri Nathji and replied to him, "Shri Nathji will teach you."

Shri Mahaprabhuji had a peacock-feather crown prepared and performed Shri Nathji's worship and ornamentation. He instructed Ramdas in the arts of *seva* and explained to him, "Everyday after you bathe in the Govinda Lake, take a pot of water and bathe Shri Nathji. Then put some clothes on Him, just as I have done. Adorn Shri Nathji with a peacock-feather crown and a *gunja* bead necklace. Whatever you are able to attain through His wish, prepare it and offer it to Shri Nathji. Maintain yourself in this manner. The Braja residents will bring their milk and curds to Shri Nathji."

Shri Mahaprabhuji told Saddu Pande and the other Braja residents that, "Shri Nathji is my all and everything. Remain attached to His *seva* and be ever-ready to react to any complications. Behave in a way that keeps Shri Nathji happy."

Then, with his own hands, Shri Mahaprabhuji prepared an offering of cooked grains for Shri Nathji. Until then Shri Nathji



had only taken milk and curds. After that day, Shri Nathji began to grab food from the Braja Vasis' lunch boxes.

PATHO, A DAIRY MAID FROM GANTOLI

One day, Patho, a dairy woman from Gantoli, was taking her son's lunch to the forest when, suddenly, Shri Nathji appeared and forcibly took two *roti* breads from her and ate them right there.

KHEMO, A DAIRY WOMAN FROM GOVARDHAN

A dairy maid named Khemo was selling her curds at Dan Ghati in Govardhan. Shri Nathji appeared to her and demanded to have her curds. He told her, "Unless you want Me to steal your curds everyday, you better bring Me two *roti* breads along with some curd rice daily."

From that day forward, whenever she went out to sell her curds, she would bring a lunch for Shri Nathji. If she forgot to bring it, that day Shri Nathji would steal her curds.

**A BRAJA VASI COWLAD FROM ADING CALLED
GOPAL**

There was a Brajavasi from Ading named Gopal. He saw Shri Nathji in a nearby forest and received the command from Him, "Bring Me some milk and *roti* breads. I will then eat them in the forest with you when you herd your cows. Also bring some barley *rotis* for us to eat."

So he brought them and Shri Nathji ate them. Shri Nathji then told Gopal, "Come and see Me every day."

Gopal was very attached to the form of Shri Nathji and came daily for darshan right after Shri Nathji was ornamented. Once



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

when he came for Shri Nathji's darshan, he was so absorbed in the thought of Shri Nathji that he forgot to remove his sword. At that time the door guard told him, "Remove your weapon before you enter the temple."

Inside the temple, Gopal bowed before Shri Nathji. His throat became choked and his eyes suddenly filled with tears. His shirt became drenched with the blissful downpour. Two people had to escort Gopal, the intoxicated bhakta, down from the Govardhan Hill.

A BRAHMAN'S SON FROM AGRA

There was a son of a Brahman from Agra. In a dream, Shri Nathji appeared to him and told him, "I am the Lord of Braja. Come to the Govardhan Hill and have My darshan."

The following morning the Brahman boy pleaded to go to Braja to have the darshan of Shri Nathji. His father finally agreed to take his son to Braja to have darshan of the Krishna temples there. His son was not satisfied with any of the temples until he finally had the darshan of Shri Nathji. Then he said, "This is the One Who appeared to me."

Shri Nathji then grabbed hold of his arm and brought him into His divine realm where he joined the other celestial cow lads. The boy's material body merged into the lila. His father, seeing his son's divine entrance into God's realm, felt honored. They were from the Madhva lineage of Vaishnavas. The father, having realized that his son had returned to his original realm, went home with a balanced mind. He was not upset by the situation. That Brahman became a great bhakta and his story is found in the *Bhakta Mala* account of great Indian saints. His name was Prem Nidhi Mishra. Shri Nathji played in many amazing ways with the Braja Vasis.



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

MANDALIYA PANDE FROM SAKHITARA

The day that Mandaliya Pande from Sakhitara came to her husband's house for the first time was the day they lost their water buffalo. The people of the household said, "She has brought bad luck with her. Who knows what will happen next?"

The new wife was upset by the accusation and prayed to Shri Nathji, "If You can find that buffalo, I will feed You ten kilos of butter. Shri Nathji, You can make everyone happy."

Through Shri Nathji's grace, the buffalo was later found and things in her household returned to normal. Then the family gave her the job of churning the curds into butter. Everyday she produced five to seven kilos of butter and each day the new wife would hide one half-kilo of butter. When she had collected ten kilos of butter, she told Shri Nathji, "Come here and take Your butter. I cannot go to You because of what my in-laws might think."

Seeing her great desire, Shri Nathji came to her house, took the butter, and returned to the Govardhan Hill. Shri Nathji ate her butter and distributed some of it to His cowlad friends as well as to the monkeys. Afterwards, Shri Nathji smeared Kumbhandas' face with her butter; He also offered some to the Govardhan Hill. This event happened on Shri Krishna's appearance day and Shri Nathji considered that day to be a divine festival. Kumbhandas sang a special song that day in which he says: "The courtyard has become an ocean of curds."

CHATURNAG, A BHAKTA FROM TORAKE GHANE

A bhakta called Chaturmag performed austerities at Torake Ghane near the Govardhan Hill. Because of his great respect for the hill, he would never walk on the holy mount. Once, in order to allow Chaturmag His darshan, Shri Nathji rode on the back of a



water buffalo to Torake Ghane accompanied by Ramdas, Saddu Pande, and a few others. When the great bhakta Chaturmag had Shri Nathji's darshan, he considered that day to be the greatest holiday. He gathered "kikora" vegetables from the forest and prepared a "helva" sweet and offered it all to Shri Nathji. Shri Nathji then told Kumbhandas to sing something about the Torake Ghane lila. Kumbhandas sang:

I like this thick grove, Torake Ghane.
But we are stuck with thorns and burrs;
Our clothes are torn.
A lion scared of a jackal?
That's something new!
Says Kumbhandas,
You are the Holder of the Mountain!
Who are these Mughals,
The brood of a lowborn widow?

This all happened in the year 1495, on the thirteenth lunar day of the bright half of the month of Shravan. After Chaturmag's Torake Ghane festival, Shri Nathji returned to the Govardhan Hill. Shri Nathji used to play with all of the Braja Vasis.

PURNAMALL HAS A DREAM TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

In the year 1499, during the second day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra, Shri Nathji gave Purnamall a dream in which He told him to, "Come to Braja and build a large temple for Me."

PURNAMALL COMES TO BRAJA

Then Purnamall gathered his wealth and left his town, Ambalya, and travelled to the Govardhan Hill. There he asked, "I have heard that Deva Daman, Shri Nathji, lives here. Where does He live?"



Then one Braja Vasi showed him where Shri Nathji lived and Purnamall became elated when he had His darshan. Then he went before Shri Mahaprabhuji and bowed low before him, submitting, "It is Shri Nathji's wish that a large temple be built. He has told me in a dream to construct His temple and I have brought the funds here to accomplish this dream."

Shri Mahaprabhuji told him, "Yes, quickly build the temple."

Shri Mahaprabhuji asked the Govardhan Hill if it would be proper to build a temple upon its sacred soil. The Govardhan Hill replied, "Shri Nathji resides in My heart. I will not be troubled. With joy, construct the temple!"

HIRAMANI IS ALSO TOLD IN A DREAM TO BUILD SHRI NATHJI'S TEMPLE

Shri Nathji also told Hiramani from Agra in a dream, "Come here and build My temple."

Hiramani came to the Govardhan Hill and said to Shri Mahaprabhuji, "Shri Nathji has told me to build a temple for Him. If you allow me, I will construct the temple."

When the foundation was completed, Shri Mahaprabhuji told him, "Bring a design for the temple."

Hiramani brought a large design of Shri Nathji's temple to Shri Mahaprabhuji. When he saw the temple tower on the design, he told Hiramani to have another one made without any towers. When the second design also included a tower on the temple, Shri Mahaprabhuji told Hiramani to make a third design and to make sure that it would not have any towers. When the third design came with towers, Shri Mahaprabhuji said to Damodardas, "It must be Shri Nathji's wish to have a temple with towers on it. Shri Nathji will stay in that temple for a while, but when conflict with the Mughals arises, Shri Nathji will move to another area."



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“He will stay there for some time and then will again return to Braja. Then Shri Nathji will remain by Punchari on the south end of the Govardhan Hill. The Govardhan Hill has three peaks: Adi peak, Brahma peak, and Deva peak. When Krishna first appeared here, He used to play by the Adi peak. Then, He sported by the Deva peak and at the end, He played by the Brahma peak. Today the Adi and Deva peaks are hidden; only the Brahma peak appears on the Govardhan Hill. Krishna is the Lord of the Govardhan Hill and that is why He makes lila on top of the hill.”

THE BUILDING OF SHRI NATHJI'S NEW TEMPLE BEGINS

After getting permission, in the year 1499, during the bright half of the month of Vaishakha, on a Sunday, Purnamall began the foundation for Shri Nathji's new temple. Purnamall had just over one hundred thousand rupees for the project. When his one hundred thousand rupees were exhausted in construction, Purnamall took a few thousand rupees and went to the south of India. There he sold some precious jewels and made three hundred thousand rupees. He returned with that money twenty years later and completed the temple. Until that time, the temple remained partially built and Shri Nathji resided in His original structure.

Shri Nathji had a desire to play with the Braja Vasis in His temple, but He had to wait twenty years for the building to be completed. During that period, Ramdas Chohan Rajput made His seva. From 1488 to the year 1519 Shri Nathji made many lilas.

SHRI NATHJI IS ESTABLISHED IN HIS NEW TEMPLE

When the big temple was finally completed, Shri Mahaprabhuji returned to Braja from his pilgrimage throughout India. By that time, the temple was completed and Shri Mahaprabhuji established Shri Nathji there in the year 1519 on the third day of the bright

The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji



half of the month of Vaishakha, on the festival day of Akshayatriya. On that day, Purnamall had the darshan of Shri Nathji and was very happy. He considered himself very fortunate that, through Shri Nathji's grace, he was able to behold such a great sight. At that time, Shri Mahaprabhuji was very pleased with Purnamall and blessed him, saying, “Ask of me anything you desire. Today I am very pleased with you ”

Purnamall then said, “Maharaj, I would like to offer some very fine sandalwood oil to Shri Nathji with my own hands.”

Shri Mahaprabhuji replied, “Don't conceal any wish in your heart today. You may happily offer the oil. Whatever you desire, do it with a blissful mind.”

Then, with great joy, Purnamall put the sandalwood oil into a bowl and applied the substance to Shri Nathji with great love and parental affection. At that moment he considered himself to be most blessed. Then Shri Mahaprabhuji adorned Shri Nathji with clothes and ornaments. On that day, the joy was ineffable and there was a huge festival. Purnamall was very happy and made generous offerings to Shri Mahaprabhuji. Shri Mahaprabhuji was happy with his disciple and presented him with a cloth shawl he had worn. Purnamall then did a full prostration before Shri Mahaprabhuji and, after requesting permission, returned to his home in Ambalaya.

SHRI NATHJI'S SEVA IS ESTABLISHED

Shri Mahaprabhuji called Saddu Pande and informed him of Shri Nathji's large new temple. “There should be a lot of *seva* to perform for Shri Nathji in the new temple and you are a Brahmin. According to the scriptures, Brahmins should make temple worship.”

Saddu Pande then explained, “We don't know anything about the etiquette of temple worship, nor do we understand anything



about temple procedure. You should put people who understand these things into the worship. There are some disciples of Shri Krishna Chaitanya who live by Radha Kunda. You should call them and established them into Shri Nathji's seva."

Then Shri Mahaprabhuji allowed some Bengali Brahmin bhaktas into Shri Nathji's seva. Shri Mahaprabhuji showed them the way to worship Shri Nathji and put Madhavendrapuri in charge of the worship. Madhavendrapuri and his disciples performed Shri Nathji's seva while Shri Mahaprabhuji's disciple, Krishnadas, was appointed as manager of the temple. Kumbhandas was appointed the temple singer. Shri Mahaprabhuji also established what foods should be offered daily to Shri Nathji and Saddu Pande made sure that the necessary ingredients and amounts were delivered to the temple. He would also gladly deliver any extra offerings. Shri Mahaprabhuji told him, "Maintain yourself on Shri Nathji's *prasada* and make sure that everything is on time. Whatever you get through the wish of God, offer it to Shri Nathji. Make sure the seva is punctual and that Shri Nathji is worshipped at all the correct times."

In this way, Shri Mahaprabhuji instructed Saddu Pande before he continued on his pilgrimage.

SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI SELLS A GOLDEN RING AND BUYS A COW FOR SHRI NATHJI

On the day before Shri Mahaprabhuji was going to leave, Shri Nathji requested, "Give Me a cow."

Shri Mahaprabhuji replied, "I will arrange for it."

He then told Saddu Pande, "Shri Nathji desires a cow. Sell this golden ring of mine and purchase a cow for Shri Nathji with the money."



Saddu Pande then replied, "I have so many cows and buffaloes. They are all yours. Just tell me how many cows you want from my herd and they are yours."

Shri Mahaprabhuji explained, "If you give *your* cow to Shri Nathji, then I have not truly given it. Shri Nathji did not make the request to you, but to me. So, sell the ring and purchase a cow."

So Saddu Pande purchased a cow and brought her before Shri Nathji, Who became very pleased. When all the Braja Vasis heard that Shri Nathji loved cows, one by one the Braja Vasis started to present Shri Nathji with cows. Someone gave Shri Nathji four cows, someone else presented Shri Nathji with two, while another person offered Him one. In this way, many Braja Vasis offered cows to Shri Nathji and His herd grew to be thousands. Then Shri Mahaprabhuji gave Shri Nathji the name Gopal. The bhakta poet Chittasvami has sung of Shri Nathji and His cows:

In front of Him there are cows,
In back of Him there are cows.
Here there are cows,
There there are cows.
Govinda loves to live among His cows.

He runs with His cows,
He is content with His cows.
He anoints His body
With the dust that is raised by those cows.

When the cows cover Braja,
One forgets the eternal realm of Vaikuntha.
Chittasvami says,
Krishna has taken on the form of Shri Vitthalnathji.
Now He wears the garb of a cowlad
And is wandering with the cows.



SHRI NATHJI GOES TO THE GOVINDA LAKE

One day, Chaturanaga went to the Govinda Lake and prepared roti breads and “bari” vegetables to offer to Shri Nathji. At that time, Madhavendrapuri had also climbed the Govardhan Hill and offered a lunch to Shri Nathji. Meanwhile, Shri Nathji left the temple to accept Chaturanaga’s offerings, but because Chaturanaga’s offerings were small in quantity, Shri Nathji was still hungry and told Madhavendrapuri, “I am hungry. Make Me another lunch.”

Madhavendrapuri then arranged for the second lunch offering.

SHRI NATHJI IS NOT PLEASED WITH THE BENGALI'S SEVA AND REQUESTS THEIR DISMISSAL.

Every day, Madhavendrapuri would adorn Shri Nathji with a crown and *kachhani* dress; on festival days, he would adorn Shri Nathji with a turban. He would also offer sandal paste to Shri Nathji daily. Shri Nathji was not pleased with this arrangement of worship. Even though Shri Mahaprabhuji had requested Madhavendrapuri to perform Shri Nathji’s seva, Madhavendrapuri didn’t follow Shri Mahaprabhuji’s advice concerning the way Shri Nathji should be served.

The other Bengali devotees continued Shri Nathji’s seva for fourteen years. Sometimes they would place the deity of Goddess Vrinda next to Shri Nathji, but Shri Nathji did not like this. Then Shri Nathji told Avadhutdas, a disciple of Shri Mahaprabhuji, to give a message to the temple manager, Krishnadas, for Him: “Tell Krishnadas that the Bengalis in the temple are stealing My money. Send them away!”



SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI RETURNS TO HIS OWN REALM

In the year 1530, on the third day of the bright half of Ashar, during the middle of the day, Shri Mahaprabhuji entered the Ganga River at Hanuman Ghat in Banaras and, while sitting in the full-lotus position, he returned with his body to his own eternal realm.

SHRI MAHAPRABHUJI'S OLDEST SON, GOPINATHJI, SITS ON THE SEAT

After Shri Mahaprabhuji left this world, his first son, Shri Gopinathji, sat on his father’s seat and performed Shri Nathji’s seva for three years. At that time the Bengalis were making Shri Nathji’s seva. Shri Gopinathji had several hundred thousand rupees worth of pots and jewels made for Shri Nathji.

SHRI PURUSHOTTAMJI LEAVES THIS WORLD

Some days later, Shri Gopinathji’s only son, Shri Purushottamji, entered a cave in the Govardhan Hill. There Shri Nathji took hold of him and allowed him entrance into the eternal lila with his body.

SHRI GOPINATHJI RETURNS TO KRISHNA'S LILA

Shri Gopinathji felt very distressed over the loss of his son. He then made a pilgrimage to Shri Jagannathpuri where he merged with the form of Shri Baladeva and became eternally established in his original form.



SHRI GUSAINJI ASCENDS THE THRONE; THE BENGALIS ARE REPLACED BY OTHERS IN SHRI NATHJI'S SEVA

Shri Mahaprabhuji had two sons. His oldest son was Shri Gopinathji, who had offered himself to Shri Jagannathji. After Gopinathji left this world, Shri Mahaprabhuji's second son, Shri Vitthalnathji, also known as Shri Gusainji, took over the lineage. Knowing it was Shri Nathji's wish, Shri Gusainji removed the Bengalis from His seva and established his disciples, Gujarati Brahmins, in their place. Ramdas became in charge of Shri Nathji's personal seva.

MADHAVENDRAPURI FOLLOWS SHRI NATHJI'S ORDERS AND GOES TO THE SOUTH TO GET SANDALWOOD

Shri Madhavendrapuri was told by Shri Nathji, "Get some pure sandalwood and offer it to Me. I love to be anointed with sandalpaste."

Hearing Shri Nathji's words, Madhavendrapuri then proceeded to the south of India.

MADHAVENDRAPURI MEETS SHRI GOPINATHJI IN PENDE

In Pende, Madhavendrapuri had darshan of the Krishna deity called Shri Gopinathji. When he returned to the pilgrim guest house, he began to think, "Here, Shri Gopinathji is offered a lot of rice pudding. I have never made that offering to Shri Nathji."

While he was concerned over this issue, Shri Gopinathji was enjoying His evening offerings that happened to have several bowls of rice pudding. The deity, Shri Gopinathji, took one of the bowls of rice pudding and hid it under the throne. When the servers



came to take the offerings away, they began to speak with each other about the whereabouts of one of the bowls of rice pudding and wondered who had stolen it. Then Shri Gopinathji told them, "No one stole that bowl. I have taken it and placed it under the throne. I want you to take it and present it to Madhavendrapuri. He serves in Shri Nathji's temple."

Then one priest went into town and began to call out, "Is there a Madhavendrapuri, the head *pujari* of Shri Nathji's temple, here?"

Hearing the call, Madhavendrapuri replied, "I am here."

The priest gave him the *khir* and explained, "Shri Gopinathji has sent you this rice pudding offering."

Madhavendrapuri then became very pleased. From that day, Shri Gopinathji became known as "Khir Charo", "the One who steals rice pudding".

MADHAVENDRAPURI AND A TAILANGA KING SET OUT WITH A LOAD OF SANDALWOOD FOR SHRI NATHJI

Madhavendrapuri proceeded to the south where he visited his disciple, a Tailanga king. The king showed him great honor and when he asked him where he was going, Madhavendrapuri told him, "Shri Nathji told me, 'I am hot and need some pure sandalwood', so I am going to the sandalwood forest to procure some sandalwood for Shri Nathji."

The king told him, "I have two large pieces of sandalwood in my home. They are so cool that if you boil fifty kilos of oil and put ten ounces of my sandalwood into that boiling oil, it will immediately cool all the oil. Offer this sandalwood to Shri Nathji and allow me to join you so I may also have Shri Nathji's darshan."

Madhavendrapuri told him, "Establish your son on the throne and proceed alone with me for Shri Nathji's darshan."



The king followed his advice and they set off on their journey for Shri Nathji's darshan, each with a load of sandalwood on his head.

MADHAVENDRAPURI HAS SHRI NATHJI'S DARSHAN, WORSHIPS SHRI HINGUPALJI AND THEN ATTAINS THE ETERNAL REALM

Madhavendrapuri went to the Balaji temple. He bathed at the Pushkarini River and sat in a small forest there. Afterwards, he meditated upon Shri Nathji. At that time, Shri Nathji knew that Madhavendrapuri was bringing sandalwood for Him and decided to appear before him there in that forest. Shri Nathji manifested, adorned in garments suitable for the hot season. Shri Nathji told Madhavendrapuri, "Anoint Me with some sandal paste, I am feeling hot."

Madhavendrapuri then prepared the substance and offered it to Shri Nathji. He prepared some coconut and bananas for Shri Nathji's enjoyment. At that point, Shri Nathji told Madhavendrapuri, "Braja is near the Himalayas. For this reason, I don't like to have sandalpaste offered to Me twelve months of the year. I only like it during the hot season. But because you desire to offer Me sandalpaste on a daily basis, you should remain here in the south on top of the sandalwood mountain. There you will find Me. Stay there and daily offer Me sandalwood paste. Take your king-disciple as your helper and remain continually absorbed in My seva. Know that I reside there. The people there call Me Himgupal. As Himgupal, I always wear clothes made of sandalwood. There are many sandalwood trees near here and Indra, the lord of heaven, sports there every day. Proceed there now. In Braja, Shri Gusainji will arrange for My seva. He will vary My ornaments, jewels and food according to the season and will offer Me many types of naturally perfumed oils. He will lovingly worship Me in many ways."



Saying that, Shri Nathji withdrew from Madhavendrapuri and returned to the Govardhan Hill. Madhavendrapuri then followed Shri Nathji's orders and always worshipped Shri Himgupal. He later attained the eternal realm.

MADHAVENDRA ATTAINS THE FINAL ABODE AND SHRI GUSAINJI HEARS ABOUT IT SIX MONTHS LATER AND IS DISTRESSED

When Shri Gusainji heard about Madhavendrapuri's passing, six months after the fact, he became sad and remarked, "Madhavendrapuri was bringing sandalwood for Shri Nathji and along the way ascended to the eternal realm. Where can we find a bhakta like him? Madhavendrapuri had studied all the scriptures and attained the essence, the path of seva. Shri Nathji showered blessings upon him."

Having said this, Shri Gusainji became filled with melancholy. Then Shri Nathji appeared and comforted him by reporting to him everything that had happened.

THE LIFE OF MADHAVENDRAPURI

Madhavendrapuri was a Tailang south Indian Brahman. He was an Acharya of the Madhva lineage and his disciple was Shri Krishna Chaitanya. Madhavendra had instructed Chaitanya to uplift the Bengal area. So the people from that area of India all became his disciples. Madhavendrapuri had taken *sannyasa* and lived in Banares. At that time, Shri Lakshman Bhatt, Shri Mahaprabhuji's father, was arranging for Shri Mahaprabhuji's sacred thread ceremony in Banares. It was then that Lakshman Bhatt requested Madhavendrapuri to teach his son. Within four months, Shri Mahaprabhuji had mastered the six scriptures and the four Vedas. As a gift to the guru, Shri Mahaprabhuji told Madhavendrapuri to ask of him whatever he wanted. Madhavendrapuri realized that



Shri Mahaprabhuji was Krishna Himself and so he said, "You will bring forth the worship of Shri Nathji. It is through your grace that I now see your divine form with yogic eyes. I would like to receive a bit of Shri Nathji's seva. This is all that I ask for."

Then Shri Mahaprabhuji replied, "When I go to Braja and establish Shri Nathji in His temple, you will also be in Braja. At that time I will give you the seva of Shri Nathji. You will serve Shri Nathji as long as He desires your services."

Later, Shri Mahaprabhuji went to Braja and established Shri Nathji's seva. At that time, Madhavendrapuri also came to Braja and Shri Mahaprabhuji gave him Shri Nathji's seva. Shri Mahaprabhuji's blessings upon Madhavendrapuri allowed him the right to serve Shri Nathji for fourteen years. Through him, many Bengalis were able to serve Shri Nathji. Shri Nathji did not see in them the exalted eligibility for seva and so He told them, "Your liberation will occur by remembering and chanting My names. Shri Gusainji will perform My seva."

A DESCRIPTION OF THE ASTHA CHHAP POETS

Then Shri Gusainji began to make the seva of Shri Nathji. When Shri Nathji appeared, eight poets, who were disciples of Shri Mahaprabhuji and Shri Gusainji, also appeared upon the earth. These eight friends of Shri Nathji sang about all the lilas. Their names as Krishna's friends are: Krishna, Tok, Rishabha, Subal, Arjuna, Vishal, Bhoj and Shri Dama. The lineage holder and poet, Shri Dwarkanathji, has sung of these eight friends of Shri Nathji:

Surdas is Krishna,
Know Paramananda as Tok.
Krishnadas is Rishabha,
Chittasvami is Subala.
Kumbhandas is Arjuna,
Chatrabhujadas is Vishala,



Nandadas is Bhoj and
Govindasvami is Shri Dama.

So Shri Dwarkesh has revealed
The eight friends of Shri Nathji.
Those intimate bhaktas
Who sing their songs
Become accomplished.

When Shri Gusainji appeared on the earth, Shri Nathji made many lilas.

THE STORY OF A NAGAR BRAHMIN FROM BANARES

There was a Nagar Brahmin from Banares. He was from the *Smarta* lineage. He married a girl from Baranagar. While he was taking his wife to Banares, his wife became the disciple of Shri Gusainji. Later, when they went to Mathura, his wife said, "Here on top of the Govardhan Hill resides Shri Nathji. He is the main deity of my lineage. Let us go and have His darshan."

After hearing his wife, and by the wish of God, he decided to go for Shri Nathji's darshan even though he was not initiated. They arrived for the afternoon darshan. At that time, his wife prayed to Shri Nathji, "Through Shri Gusainji, You have taken hold of my hand. Now relieve me from all bad association and keep me close to You."

Upon hearing her request, Shri Nathji took hold of her and right there accepted her into His lila with her body. Her husband was so shocked to lose his wife that he started to die. Then Shri Gusainji showed him the eternal lila of Shri Nathji and there he saw his wife in her eternal form as a Gopi. Then all of his doubts were removed and he also became a disciple of Shri Gusainji and later, in his next life, he attained the same lila.



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

In his next birth he was born in the nearby town of Gantoli. He became the well-known *pakhavaj* drummer, Shyam. He had a daughter called Lalita. She played the *vina* very well and her father accompanied her very nicely on the drum. One night, Shri Nathji stayed up the whole night in order to hear them play. Shri Nathji returned to His temple after the conch sounded the next morning.

When Shri Gusainji went to wake Shri Nathji up and saw that His eyes were red he asked, "Baba, where did You spend Your sleepless night?"

Shri Nathji then explained, "I went to Gantoli where I heard Lalita play the *vina* while her father, Shyam, played the drum. They were very inspired."

After hearing Shri Nathji's words, Shri Gusainji called Shyam Pakhavaji and Lalita and initiated them. From then on they were very involved with Shri Nathji's seva. Wherever Shri Nathji played, the Astha Chhap sang while Lalita and Shyam played the *vina* and the drum.

ALL THE BRAJA VASIS GATHER AND OFFER SHRI NATHJI COWS

When the Braja Vasis heard that Shri Nathji liked cows very much, they all got together and decided that whoever had cows would offer a cow or two to Shri Nathji. The residents of the twenty-four towns that are close to the Govardhan Hill also decided that they would give a cow or two to Shri Nathji. They resolved to give the first-born cows of any twenty pregnant cows to Shri Nathji. In this way, thousands of cows were offered to Shri Nathji. Then Shri Nathji enjoyed milk, curds, and butter from His own herd.



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

SHRI GUSAINJI ESTABLISHES SHRI NATHJI'S OPULENT SEVA

Then Shri Gusainji established that every year, one hundred thousand rupees would be spent on Shri Nathji's seva for sweet balls, sweet breads and other offerings. Shri Gusainji also established the yearly festival calendar. Aside from a pot of curds that Shri Nathji took from one Braja Vasi's house, all of His other milk and curds came from His own cows.

THE BRAJA VASI CURDS ARE STOPPED AND BEGUN AGAIN

One day after the *Raj Bhog arati*, a bhakta who served in Shri Nathji's temple saw a piece of roti bread in a pot of curds that a Braja Vasi had brought for Shri Nathji's offering. When that bhakta told Shri Gusainji about the impure bowl of curds, Shri Gusainji prepared another lunch for Shri Nathji and did not allow that Braja Vasi to bring his bowl of curds for Shri Nathji's offering. Instead, Shri Gusainji arranged for a bowl of curds to be brought from the temple kitchen. On the following day, when Shri Nathji was offered His lunch, He mentioned to Ramdas, "I want that bowl of curds the Braja Vasi always brings Me. Make sure it is clean and offer it daily."

After hearing Shri Nathji's wish from Ramdas, Shri Gusainji then immediately offered that Braja Vasi's curds. Only then did Shri Nathji partake of His lunch.

SHRI GUSAINJI MAKES A COW PEN AND APPOINTS FOUR COW HERDERS

Shri Gusainji made a large cow pen for Shri Nathji's cows on the road to Gulal Kund and appointed four herders to take care of the cows. Their names are: Krishnadas, Kumbhandas' son,



Gopinathdas, Gopal Gwal and Ganga Gwal. During the day, when they went out to herd the cows, Shri Nathji would join the cows and His circle of cow lads.

SHRI NATHJI TAKES EIGHT SWEETBALLS AND GIVES THEM TO THE COW LADS

One day, Shri Nathji was playing with the cowlads at Pyauke Dak. At that time, Gopinathdas said, "O Shri Nathji, Shri Gusainji gives You lots of sweetballs to eat. From those offerings, why don't You bring us some?"

Then Shri Nathji replied, "I will bring some tomorrow."

On the following day, during the *Gopivallabh* offering in the morning, Shri Nathji took eight sweetballs from the offering and distributed them to the cow lads. He gave each of them one, but awarded Gopinathdas with two. Gopinathdas ate one sweetball and tied the other one into a cloth for later. In the afternoon, when they returned home, they came before Shri Gusainji and bowed. At that time, all the temple cooks were standing before Shri Gusainji talking about the eight sweetballs that were missing from the offerings. Then Gopinathdas showed them Shri Nathji's sweet ball and said, "Would this be one of those sweet balls?"

Shri Gusainji and the other temple cooks replied, "That is one of the eight missing sweetballs."

Then Gopinathdas explained, "Today Shri Nathji brought us eight sweetballs and gave everyone one except me. I got two."

From the sweetball that Gopinathdas had received, Shri Gusainji took a small piece for himself and then distributed some of that blessed sweetball to all of the Vaishnavas there. Then Shri Gusainji said, "Make arrangements for Gopinathdas to receive a sweet ball from the temple every day. This is Shri Nathji's snack food. All the people who serve in the temple should be presented with *prasada* according to the seva they do."



SHRI NATHJI GIVES TWO SWEETBALLS TO A RICE FARMER

By the Govardhan Hill there is a rice field that belongs to Shri Nathji. Two young boys looked after that field. One day, one of the boys went for lunch and was late in returning. The other boy then raised his hand towards Shri Nathji's flag on top of the temple and called out to Shri Nathji, "O Friend, Shri Nathji, I watch over Your rice fields. Send me something to eat. I am hungry."

Hearing him, the merciful Shri Nathji came and brought him two sweetballs. Later, Shri Nathji told Shri Gusainji, "I gave two sweetballs to the boy who tends the rice fields."

Shri Gusainji then called the boy, Haraji Gwala, and placed him in Shri Nathji's seva. Now there is a famous lake named after him called Haraji. Shri Nathji's cows would go to that lake every day to drink water.

SHRI NATHJI DOES NOT GET THE BRAJA VASI'S CURD AT LUNCH SO HE TAKES HIS GOLDEN BOWL AND EATS CURD AT THE GUJARI'S HOUSE

So the Braja Vasi pot of curd continued to be offered to Shri Nathji every day. One day, that pot of curds was late in arriving. Meanwhile, Shri Nathji's lunch had been offered and taken away and His garland was called for presentation, but the blessed bowl of curd was not offered. After the temple was closed for the afternoon, Shri Nathji thought, "I did not have any curd from the Braja Vasi today."

Shri Nathji took a golden bowl from the temple and went to the nearby town of Baroli where Shobha Gujari lived and told her, "Give Me some curd."



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She gave Him some fresh sweet curd in His golden bowl and Shri Nathji enjoyed it to His complete satisfaction. Shri Nathji left the bowl there and proceeded to Shyam Dak. There, He drank some water at the Jalghar and saw Gopinathdas, Kumbhandas, Govindasvami and other bhaktas herding cows. Shri Nathji decided to join all the boys for a game of hide and seek. When the afternoon conch sounded, marking the beginning of the afternoon seva, Shri Nathji returned to His temple while the cows returned to their cow pen.

Meanwhile, when the bhaktas in the temple had noticed that a golden bowl was missing, they started to question each other. At that time, Shobha Gujarari arrived from Baroli with the golden bowl in her hand and gave it to Shri Gusainji saying, "Maharaj, today Shri Nathji came to my home to eat some curd. He left this bowl in my home so I am returning it to you."

After hearing that, Shri Gusainji became very concerned and remembered that the Braja Vasi bowl of curd was not offered today and he then knew that Shri Nathji could not remain without the Braja Vasi's curd. He understood Shri Nathji went to Shobha's house to eat curd. From that day on, that curd was called for early so that it would always be part of the lunch offering.

SHRI NATHJI EATS RUPA'S RICE AND CURDS

One day, while Shri Nathji was standing next to the Govinda Lake, a Braja Vasi woman passed by bringing some rice and curds to her son. Seeing this and being hungry, Shri Nathji asked her for some of her rice and curds in a bowl. Rupa then offered Shri Nathji some of the rice and curds intended for her son in a bowl and Shri Nathji joyfully took it back to temple on the Govardhan Hill. After He finished eating it, Shri Nathji left the bowl in the temple. Later, when the temple doors were opened in the afternoon, the temple cook saw the bowl lying in the inner chamber. When



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he asked the person who cleans the pots about it, he said that he had washed all of the pots and bowls and knew nothing about that bowl. Later, Shri Nathji told Shri Gusainji, "Rupa Gujarari gave Me some of her curds and rice. I washed her bowl and left it here in the temple."

Then Shri Gusainji thought, "We are now in the hot season. Rice and curds is a good refreshing offering for this time of year. As of today, we will begin to offer rice mixed with curds every day to Shri Nathji."

In this way, special offerings were put into Shri Nathji's seva according to the season and time of day. It all occurred according to Shri Nathji's wishes.

SHRI NATHJI HAS HIS LUNCH AT SHYAM DAK

Once Shri Nathji told Gopaldas, "Tell Shri Gusainji that I am at the Apsara Lake. Request him to quickly bring Me some rice and curds in the forest at Shyam Dak. Tell him I am hungry."

Then Gopaldas told Shri Gusainji, who was in the temple, to immediately bring a lunch for Shri Nathji and go to Shyam Dak. There, Shri Nathji and His brother, Balaram, along with all of Their friends partook of the lunch. After experiencing that lila, Shri Gusainji returned to his room in Jatipura just below the Govardhan Hill.

SHRI NATHJI GOES TO SHRI GUSAINJI'S HOUSE IN MATHURA, WHERE EVERYTHING IS OFFERED TO HIM, AND PLAYS HOLI THERE BEFORE RETURNING TO THE GOVARDHAN HILL

Once when Shri Gusainji went to Gujarat, Shri Nathji told Shri Gusainji's oldest son, Shri Giridhariji, "I would like to see your house in Mathura."



Knowing Shri Nathji's wish, Shri Giridharji prepared a horse-drawn chariot for Shri Nathji and had it ready for Him by the side of the Govardhan Hill at *Dandavati Shila*. Then Shri Nathji jumped on Giridharji's back and was carried to the Dandavati Shila where He got into the chariot. Shri Giridharji then urged the chariot on towards his home in Mathura. They arrived at Shri Gusainji's *Sat Ghara* house in Mathura in the year 1567, on the seventh day of the dark half of the month of Phalgun. Even today, the day that Shri Nathji arrived in Mathura is celebrated in all the seven houses of the Pushti Marga. On the day that Shri Nathji arrived in Mathura, Shri Giridharji and his entire family offered everything they owned to Shri Nathji. Shri Giridharji came out wearing just a single cloth. All the other wives and sisters of the family also offered everything they owned and each wore nothing but a sari. They offered to Shri Nathji priceless jewels, cloth, vessels, chariots, horses and absolutely everything they owned. Shri Giridharji's sister, Kamala, secretly kept one nose ring for herself and offered everything else to Shri Nathji. Knowing this, Shri Nathji told her, "Give Me My nose ring." The way that Shri Nathji reacted to the situation clearly indicated His total acceptance of her.

SHRI NATHJI PLAYS HOLI

Then Shri Nathji played Holi with Shri Giridharji and the rest of his family. Every member of the family played Holi with Shri Nathji. Afterwards, Shri Nathji told all the female members of the family to play Holi with Him. While they played Holi, they wore blouses adorned with *choba*, a black sandalwood extract; they were all adorned in a very enchanting fashion. The joy that arose there was ineffable. They then stole Shri Nathji's flute and would only return it to Him when Shri Nathji agreed to give them some snack food.



SHRI NATHJI RETURNS TO THE GOVARDHAN HILL AND MEETS SHRI GUSAINJI

Shri Gusainji, hearing about Shri Nathji's visit to Mathura, started his return journey to Braja from Gujarat. Knowing that Shri Gusainji was returning, Shri Nathji told Shri Giridharji, "If Shri Gusainji does not see Me on top of the Govardhan Hill, he will be very upset. Bring Me back to the Govardhan Hill today."

After taking His mid-morning Gopivallabh food offering, Shri Nathji sat in His chariot and told Shri Giridharji, "Quickly drive the chariot to the Govardhan Hill and offer Me lunch and dinner together when we arrive there." Shri Nathji arrived at the Govardhan Hill at Dandavat Shila an hour before sunset. Shri Nathji then climbed on Shri Giridharji's back and was brought up to the temple where He sat on His throne. This entire lila is divine beyond any logic. The day Shri Nathji returned was Narasimha Chaturdashi, and the festival was celebrated on the Govardhan Hill where Shri Nathji's lunch and dinner were offered together. Every year on the day of Narasimha Chaturdashi, Shri Nathji is still offered His lunch and dinner together.

On the following day, Shri Gusainji returned from Gujarat to the Govardhan Hill, where he heard all about Shri Nathji's lila in Mathura. Shri Gusainji then said, "Shri Mahaprabhuji established Shri Nathji on top of the Govardhan Hill. Shri Nathji has blessed me and has fulfilled my wishes. He has returned to give me His darshan on top of the Govardhan Hill."

Then Shri Gusainji affectionately pinched Shri Nathji's cheeks and asked Him, "Why did you go to Mathura?"

Shri Nathji replied, "I went to see your daughters and daughter-in-laws."

In this way they spoke to each other and were both very pleased.



SHRI NATHJI'S SHAWL GETS STUCK ON A BRANCH

One day, Shri Nathji went with Govinda Swami to the Shyam Dak forest to play. Later in the afternoon, the conch from the temple sounded marking the beginning of the afternoon worship.

While Shri Nathji was trying to return to the temple quickly, His shawl got caught on a branch and ripped, leaving a portion of the shawl hanging on the tree. When Shri Gusainji arrived in the temple during the afternoon darshan and saw that Shri Nathji's cloth was torn, he was distressed. He could not understand how it happened. Then Govinda Swami arrived and returned the missing piece of cloth to Shri Gusainji and told him, "Your son is very unsteady."

Shri Gusainji took the piece of cloth and attached it to Shri Nathji's shawl and told Ramdas, "From today onwards, after sounding the conch, wait a few moments before you enter the temple to open Shri Nathji's curtain."

SHRI NATHJI BECOMES SMALL TO ACCEPT A SMALL GARMENT

Once, Shri Gusainji made a black outfit for Shri Nathji, but it was too small. When Shri Gusainji tried to put it on Shri Nathji, Shri Nathji, knowing the garment was too small, took on a smaller form so the cloth would fit Him. Seeing this lila, Shri Gusainji became very pleased. He then recited the following *sloka* in front of his sons, Shri Giridhari and Gokulnathji:

Krishna, the life of Gokul, has appeared through
His grace in manifested form and appears in my
heart in a very small form as well as in a huge form.



SHRI NATHJI PLAYS A BOARD GAME WITH RUPA MANJARI

One day, Shri Nathji played "chopad", a board game, with Rupa Manjari, the daughter of a cow herder. He played that game with her all night long. He also listened to her play the vina. She was a good player. Nandadas was also there and sang beautifully. Nandadas wrote a work for her called the *Rupa Manjari* in which he says:

The lady Rupa Manjari made a dwelling
For Shri Nathji within her heart.

On the following morning, when Shri Nathji returned to His temple, Shri Gusainji noticed that Shri Nathji's eyes were red during the morning Mangala darshan and inquired, "Where did You spend the night?"

Shri Nathji then told him everything, "I went to play 'chopad' with Rupa Manjari."

Shri Gusainji then considered, "It is troublesome for Shri Nathji to go so far to play. He can play here in the temple with His Braja Bhaktas."

From that day, the board game 'chopad' was established into Shri Nathji's seva.

EMPEROR AKBAR'S LADY, BIBI TAJ

Alikan Patan's daughter was named Bibi Taj. She wrote the Holi Dhamar poem:

I see Him coming,
Krishna, the Lord of Taj,
Singing the spring Holi song.

Taj was the disciple of Shri Gusainji. When Shri Gusainji came



to know that Shri Nathji used to go to Agra in order to play chess with Taj, he arranged for a chess set to be placed before Him in the temple. One day, the Emperor came to the Govardhan Hill. Taj had also come with him to have Shri Nathji's darshan.

She entered the temple and saw Shri Nathji in His full divine glory. When Shri Nathji called out to her, this increased her divine distress. She tried to run to meet and merge with Shri Nathji saying, "I will join You, Shri Nathji!"

At that time, Vrindavandas's daughter was with Taj. She was a friend who used to play chess with her. When Taj tried to run to Shri Nathji, Vrindavandas's daughter struggled to stop her and, holding her by the arm, brought her down the Govardhan Hill.

There, below Shri Nathji's temple, Taj left her body. At that moment, she attained a divine body and entered into the lila.

Everyone there became very concerned about what Emperor Akbar would do. But through Shri Nathji's power, when the emperor heard about what had happened, he said, "She has returned to her own place," and then proceeded to Delhi.

A similar event happened with the temple manager, Krishnadas, and a prostitute that he brought to dance before Shri Nathji. She also left her body before Shri Nathji. The rest of Shri Nathji's lilas even the serpent-god Shesha, with his thousand mouths, cannot fully relate.

SHRI NATHJI HAS THE ROOF TERRACE REMOVED

Shri Mahaprabhuji had a window made in the temple in front of the Vichhau Lake through which he could see his cowlads. One day, while Shri Gokulnathji, Shri Mahaprabhuji's grandson, was making Shri Nathji's ornamentation during the hot season, some sunlight came into the room through that window and made him feel very hot. Shri Gokulnathji then had a room constructed



on the adjacent roof, which sheltered that window from the hot sun, and returned to Gokul. Shri Nathji told the sweeper, Mohan Bhangi, "Go and tell Gokulnathji to take down the room he made on the roof. I can no longer see the Vichhau Lake."

Hearing Shri Nathji's words, Mohan Bhangi ran to Ading where he meet Shri Gokulnathji and told him, "Maharaj, one little thing has become very important. Shri Nathji told me to tell you to remove that room you made on the roof. Shri Nathji says that now He cannot see the Vichhau Lake."

Then Shri Gokulnathji asked, "Shri Nathji knows my name?"

Gokulnathji then became choked with emotion and asked four more times, "Does Shri Nathji really know my name? What a command He has given me today!"

Then Gokulnathji returned to the Govardhan Hill and made a special offering to Shri Nathji. After he apologized to Shri Nathji, he had the roof room removed. This all pleased Shri Nathji.

THE STORY OF KALYAN JOTISHI AND HOW SHRI GIRIDHARIJI MERGES INTO THE FORM OF SHRI MATHURESHJI

Kalyan Jotishi was a follower of Shri Nathji who used to sing before Him. One day, while Shri Giridhariji was giving a *betel* leaf to Shri Nathji, Kalyan sang:

O friend!
Krishna is my life;
I have no other meditation.
He removes my pain
And is the source of my pleasure.

Shri Giridhariji then considered, "When Shri Gusainji's disciples, the Astha Chhap poets, sang before Shri Nathji, He used to laugh and talk with them. Now He does not laugh nor speak



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with the bhaktas.”

Shri Nathji, the inner witness, knew of Shri Giridhariji's concern. While Giridhariji was giving Shri Nathji a *betel pan*, He laughed and told Shri Giridhariji, “That bhakta sings very nicely.”

As Shri Nathji was saying that, at that moment Kalyan Jotishi had the darshan of the liberated abode. Then Giridhariji mentioned, “You can only tell where Shri Nathji will shower grace after the fact.”

His brother Gokulnathji added, “Shri Nathji always remains as one nectar essence. It is there in the beginning, middle and end. When our father, Shri Gusainji, was alive, the pure Pushthi Marga lived. At that time, Shri Nathji spoke and played with all the bhaktas. Now the following of the Pushthi Marga is a mixed group. Shri Nathji accepts all of their seva, but only speaks with those who are purely grace-filled.”

Some days later, after hearing his brother Gokulnathji's words, Shri Giridhariji merged into Mathureshji's (Shri Krishna's) face. This all happened when Shri Gokulnathji went to Kashmir to defend the right of Vaishnavas to wear tulsi necklaces. One day during his absence, Shri Giridhariji made Shri Mathureshji's ornamentation while his son, Shri Damodarji, was serving Shri Nathji. During the seva, Shri Mathureshji suddenly yawned and Shri Giridhariji merged into the Lord's mouth with his body and entered into Shri Krishna's lila. Seeing this event, his two brothers became very concerned. Then Shri Nathji handed them a shawl and said, “Don't worry. Perform Shri Giridhariji's last rites with this shawl.”

SHRI DAMODARJI ASCENDS THE SEAT

After Giridhariji left this world, his oldest son, Damodarji, ascended his father's seat. At that time there were three hundred thousand rupees in Shri Nathji's offering box. The storeroom



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manager took that money and hid it. Shri Nathji then told Shri Damodarji, “Under the Jan Ajan tree you will find the three hundred thousand rupees that the storeroom manager stole. Call for it.”

Shri Damodarji then retrieved the money. In this way Shri Nathji looked after His divine wealth.

SHRI NATHJI IS ADORNED WITH A DAGGER

Once Shri Nathji had the desire to hold a dagger. Then Shri Gusainji said, “I will adorn Shri Nathji with a dagger on the Vijay Dashami festival.”

At that time Shri Nathji was adorned with the knife.

DURING A QUARREL, SHRI VITTHALRAYA GOES TO AGRA, SHRI NATHJI GIVES HIS COMMAND AND THE EMPEROR RESOLVES THE DISAGREEMENT

One day, Shri Damodarji's son, Shri Vitthalraya, went to Agra. There was a quarrel concerning the right to Shri Nathji's seva among the lineage holders. Shri Vitthalraya was very distressed over the daily conflict. He prayed to Shri Nathji, “I have no one else.”

He later told the emperor what happened when Shri Nathji appeared to him. He explained to the emperor that Shri Nathji came before him with a red cane in His hand and placed His hand upon his head and appeased him, “When Shri Gusainji was at the Govardhan Hill, his seven sons stood before Me and at that time Shri Gusainji said to Me, ‘Whoever You are pleased with, have them make Your seva.’ At that time I took hold of Shri Giridhariji's hand. Of all of the seven sons, Giridhariji is the one who has the capacity. He brought Me to his home in Mathura and offered everything to Me. He brought Me from the Dandavat Shila all the way up the Govardhan Hill on his back. And when Shri Navanita



Priyaji (Child Krishna) was to be brought to Braja, that responsibility, although given to the other six brothers, was handled by Shri Giridhariji. For that reason, Shri Giridhariji has the right to the main seva. The year has three hundred and sixty days. Shri Giridhariji will make the seva during the sixty days of festivals and during the other three hundred days, My ornamentation will be made by the other lineage holders.”

Saying that, Shri Nathji returned to His temple on the Govardhan Hill and on the following day, just after Shri Nathji had given instructions for the division of the seva, the emperor issued a decree outlining the exact same agreement. Then the quarrel came to an end and Shri Vitthalraya returned home.

SHRI VITTHALRAYA PUTS A TIPARA CROWN ON SHRI NATHJI

Shri Vitthalraya adorned Shri Nathji very nicely with a Tipara crown. Shri Nathji enjoyed this Tipara so much that two or four times a month He would ask to wear it. Shri Nathji was always very pleased when He saw Himself in the mirror wearing that crown. Once, when Shri Vitthalraya went to Agra, another lineage holder wanted to adorn Shri Nathji with the Tipara crown, but Shri Nathji would not allow it and said, “When Shri Vitthalraya returns, then I will wear the Tipara.”

In this way, Shri Nathji favored His Own.

SHRI GIRIDHARIJI PLAYS HOLI AND SWINGS SHRI NATHJI

Once, Shri Vitthalraya’s son, Shri Giridhariji, arrived in Lahore sixteen days before the Dol festival. Shri Nathji told him, “I will only play Holi when you come and play with Me. One bhakta is going to offer you one hundred thousand rupees. Take that offering and quickly return to Braja.”



The following day, after Giridhariji received the offering, he set out for Braja and reached the Govardhan Hill twelve days later. There he played Holi with Shri Nathji and swung Him during the Dol festival. Shri Nathji became very happy. In this way Shri Nathji favored Shri Giridhariji. Through Shri Gusainji’s intercession, all the lineage holders could perform Krishna’s seva, but the main seva of Shri Nathji is reserved for the descendants of Shri Giridhariji, the oldest son of Shri Gusainji.

SHRI GOKULNATHJI PLAYS HOLI WITH SHRI NATHJI

There is a similar story concerning Shri Gokulnathji. Once, when Shri Gokulnathji went to Kashmir in order to defend the right of Vaishnavas to wear their tulsī necklaces, the entire spring season passed before he could return to Braja. He did not have an opportunity to play Holi with Shri Nathji. Then Shri Nathji told one cowlad who helped with the milk preparations in the temple, “Tell Gokulnathji that I want him to play Holi with Me.”

Then Gokulnathji played Holi with Shri Nathji for fifteen days after the Holi festival was over. Shri Gokulnathji made a house of roses for Shri Nathji to sit in as well as a bower of mango tree branches. On that day Shri Nathji was adorned with a crown and the following song was sung :

Spring remains forever in Vrindavan where
Krishna wanders through the vines and trees.

This is how Shri Nathji has concern for Shri Vallabhacharya’s lineage.

One day, Shri Lakshman Maharaja, who was a very good singer and a descendant of Shri Raghunathji, was singing a song before Shri Nathji. After the ornamentation had been taken off in the early evening, he sang:

She forgot to milk, or even to arrange for,
the cow to be milked.



On another day during the spring season, a full hour after the doors to the temple had been shut, Shri Lakshman Maharaj was still singing to Shri Nathji. Shri Gokulnathji then asked, "Who is singing at this late hour after the temple has been closed?"

When someone told him it was Shri Lakshman, he ordered that the singing be stopped. That evening Shri Gokulnathji had a dream in which Shri Nathji told him, "Let Shri Lakshman sing when he wants. It is his seva."

ON THE WAY TO DWARKA, SHRI GUSAINJI VISITS SINHAD IN MEVAR, TELLS OF SHRI NATHJI'S FUTURE ARRIVAL THERE, AND MAKES THE KING AND QUEEN HIS DISCIPLES

Once, while Shri Gusainji was on his way to Dwarka, he saw a very lovely spot in Mevar, Rajasthan, called Sinhad and mentioned to Harivamshaji, "In the future, Shri Nathji will reside here. As long as I am here, Shri Nathji will not leave the Govardhan Hill."

Shri Gusainji then stayed there for two days. The king of the region, Shri Udaya Singh, came for his darshan and presented him with one hundred gold coins. Shri Gusainji blessed him with one of his shawls. After the king accepted it, he bowed to Shri Gusainji and returned to his palace. Later his queen came. She was the daughter of the princess Mira Bai. The queen's daughter-in-law, Ajaba Kunvari, also came and took initiation from Shri Gusainji. She was very attached to Shri Gusainji's form. When Shri Gusainji decided to head on to Dwarka, Ajaba fainted at the thought of separation from him. Then Shri Gusainji told her, "I cannot live here, but Shri Nathji will daily come here and allow you His darshan."

Saying that, Shri Gusainji proceeded to Dwarka.



SHRI NATHJI COMES TO MEVAR DAILY, PLAYS CHOPAR WITH AJABA, AND TELLS OF HIS PLANS TO LIVE IN MEVAR

Afterwards, Shri Nathji daily came from the Govardhan Hill to Mevar to appear before Ajaba. After playing the board game Chopar with her, Shri Nathji would return to the Govardhan Hill. One day Ajaba requested, "In Your comings and goings to Mevar from the Govardhan Hill, You are very troubled. Live here in Mevar, then I can always see You."

Shri Nathji replied, "As long as Shri Gusainji remains on the earth, I will not leave the Govardhan Hill. Afterwards, I will definitely come to Mevar and will stay here for many years. Then, when Shri Gusainji again appears in his lineage, I will return to Braja and will play at the Govardhan Hill for many years."

Saying that, Shri Nathji returned to the Govardhan Hill.

SHRI NATHJI REMEMBERS MEVAR AND INSPIRES A MUGHAL TO MAKE HIM LEAVE THE GOVARDHAN HILL

Many years later, Shri Nathji remembered that He was supposed to move to Mevar and thought, "I must go to Mevar. But Shri Mahaprabhuji has established My temple on the Govardhan Hill, so the lineage holders will only agree to the move if they are forced. So I will inspire a demon to force My move to Mevar."

Then, one night Shri Vallabhji Maharaj had a dream in which he saw that Shri Nathji was leaving the Govardhan Hill for another place. The following day, after the evening arati, when all the temple bhaktas returned home, one Mughal came to the temple and started to sweep the floor with his beard. No one knew about this because he arrived in the temple through his yogic powers



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and then would leave the same way. One day, Shri Nathji became pleased with him and gave him two betel leaves from His snack box and told him, "I will give you a kingdom for fifty-two years. Make Me leave the Govardhan Hill and never come to My temple here again. My temple on the Govardhan Hill will become secret. Make your Mosque, bow your head there and don't ever enter into this temple again!"

Upon hearing Shri Nathji's words, the Mughal returned to Agra and commanded a powerful kingdom.

THE EMPEROR SENDS A MESSENGER TO SHRI NATHJI'S TEMPLE

One day, that emperor sent a messenger to the Govardhan Hill. He went before Shri Vitthalraya's younger son, Shri Govindaji, who was the temple manager at the time, as well as before Shri Dauji, the son of Shri Giridhariji, who was only fifteen years old. The minister informed them, "The emperor has said to tell you hermits that you must show him a miracle. If you don't, then you must leave this place."

Later, Shri Govindaji asked Shri Nathji, "The emperor has asked to see a miracle, but in this path miracles only happen through Your grace. If it is Your wish, I will show him a miracle."

When Shri Nathji did not answer him, Shri Govindaji became very concerned and thought, "Without Shri Nathji's order I cannot show a miracle; but if I do not show a miracle, then we cannot remain here. What is the solution?"

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF SHRI GIRIDHARIJI'S ENTRANCE INTO LILA

By that time, Shri Govindaji's older brother, Shri Giridhariji, had entered into the lila. Shri Nathji showered much grace over

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him. Shri Giridhariji did not pay heed to the emperor's order and said, "As long as I remain on this earth, nothing will happen to our position on the Govardhan Hill."

After saying that, he went to Shri Nathji's temple. Giridhariji was in disagreement with the Brahmins and warriors in Govardhan. Because of the unrest, he no longer used the Dan Ghati route through Govardhan and started to make another route over the Govardhan hill by the Govinda Lake. To overcome the sin of making a new route over the Govardhan Hill, Giridhariji was stabbed by someone holding a knife and entered into the lila where he is eternally engaged in Shri Nathji's seva.

AFTER GIRIDHARIJI ENTERS THE LILA, HE TELLS GOVINDAJI THAT IT IS SHRI NATHJI'S WISH TO GO TO MEVAR

Shri Nathji told Shri Giridhariji that Shri Govindaji is very concerned so, "Give him your darshan and tell him to take Me to Mevar."

In the middle of the night, Shri Giridhariji appeared to Shri Govindaji. Shri Govindaji gave him a seat and Shri Giridhariji repeated to him Shri Mahaprabhuji's teachings from his *Navaratna*:

Those who have completely surrendered their selves should never have any anxiety because the Lord is established in grace and will not place them in the way of the world.

He explained to him, "It is Shri Nathji's wish to play in a hidden fashion on the Govardhan Hill. When Shri Mahaprabhuji made Shri Nathji's birth chart, he gave Him the name Gopal which means 'the protector of the cows'. To protect the cows, Shri Nathji will leave the Govardhan Hill. The Mughal invaders are only an excuse for Shri Nathji to move to Mevar. If He does not go, the



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wishes of the bhaktas will remain unfulfilled. Prepare Shri Nathji's chariot. Tomorrow is the perfect thirteenth lunar day. Just after sunset, start your journey with Shri Nathji. Do not show any miracles. Act according to Shri Nathji's wishes and go wherever Shri Nathji desires to go. Shiva will go ahead of the chariot and lead the way with a torch. The first night you will stay in Agra. From there, you should always prepare the next day's camp in advance so that everything is ready when Shri Nathji arrives. Shri Nathji will convey His desires to the bhakta Gangabai. Ask her what to do. Only when the Braja Vasis touch Shri Nathji and insult Him will the chariot be able to move. Shri Nathji will only get up and go when the Braja Vasis jab him."

Having said that, Shri Giridhariji went to Shri Nathji's sleeping quarters.

ON HIS WAY TO MEVAR, SHRI NATHJI FIRST GOES TO AGRA

The following morning, Shri Nathji's lunch was offered early and after the chariot was adorned and prepared for Him, a horse was yoked to the chariot and stood ready by the Dandavati Shila at the base of the Govardhan Hill. The leaders were called and prepared everything. The three brothers, Govindaji, Shri Bal Krishnaji and Shri Vallabhji, gathered together and after bowing before Shri Nathji, requested Him in the presence of all the bhaktas to proceed, but Shri Nathji would not move. Then they called some Braja Vasis who came and teased Shri Nathji. "So You don't want to go, do You! Do You want all of us to get our heads chopped off?"

Hearing them, Shri Nathji had a big laugh and blossomed like a lotus. He then quickly got up and sat in the chariot. This occurred on a Friday, on the fifteenth lunar day during the bright half of the month of Asoja in the year 1669, during the last three hours of the



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night. Shri Vallabhji prepared a sweet fruit salad for Shri Nathji. After Shri Nathji partook of it, they tried to make the chariot move, but it would not budge. Then all the lineage holders requested Shri Nathji to move and Shri Nathji replied, "I will only move when you put Gangabai in a wagon behind My chariot."

They then brought a wagon for Gangabai that always followed Shri Nathji's chariot. Whenever Shri Nathji's chariot stopped, everyone would ask Gangabai what to do and she would convey Shri Nathji's desire to them. In this way, they reached Agra in one night. Shivaji provided light along the way with his torch. Shri Nathji stayed at His temple in Agra.

TWO WATER BOYS' SERVICE AND DIVINE VICTORY

There were two boys who used to carry water for Shri Nathji. After Shri Nathji had left the Govardhan Hill, the emperor's chief came to destroy the temple with two hundred men in his army. The two water boys stood by the door of the temple. They prevented their entry and in the ensuing battle killed all of the Mughal invaders. They spared their leader to inform his superiors that if he brought more forces, they would also die. Those two boys were filled with so much power that for one and a half months they continually stood by the temple doors with their swords without experiencing hunger or thirst. For forty-five days they did not allow the temple to be harmed. Other Mughal generals came seventeen times with five to six hundred men, but those two boys killed all of them. The emperor then told his minister to take a very large force and to attack the temple. At that time Shri Nathji thought, "Those two boys are filled with such power that they can kill all of the Mughal invaders. I will appear before them."

Then Shri Nathji came from Agra and appeared by the temple doors and said, "Shri Giridhariji has given you such power that you were able to kill all those barbarians. Now it is not My wish



to stay here. Wherever I have given a promise to My bhaktas, to that place I go. After fulfilling My bhaktas' desires in other places, I will return to Braja and everything will be accomplished. Stop fighting and return to My lila."

Saying that, Shri Nathji returned to Agra. Then through the desire of Shri Nathji, those two boys attained divine vision. They beheld the Govardhan Hill as being comprised of precious jewels and saw many temples on the jewelled hill. Among them there was one jewelled temple. A kettle drum sounded outside of its gate. There they saw a mosque and a Muslim cleaning the temple floor with his beard. Then they understood Shri Nathji's wish completely. They put down their swords, left their material bodies and attained Shri Nathji's eternal lila. Their names were Seva and Sabha.

THE EMPEROR ATTACKS FOR THE EIGHTEENTH TIME AND BUILDS A MOSQUE

Then the emperor attacked for the eighteenth time with a large army and workmen who would destroy the temple. When they came to the Govardhan Hill, Shri Nathji made it so that they could not even see the temple. They left the area after constructing a mosque.

THE COMPLETE STORY OF SHRI NATHJI'S TRIP TO AGRA

Shri Nathji reached Agra an hour and a half before sunrise and found all the doors to His temple open and the guards fast asleep. No one stopped Shri Nathji's entrance. Shri Nathji got down from His chariot and went straight into the temple. After establishing Himself, He said, "After I celebrate Annakuta, I will move on from here."



At the time Shri Nathji came to Agra, the emperor was sleeping on his royal bed in the palace. Shri Nathji appeared there and hit him with a stick and told him in his dream, "I have come to Agra today. What can you do to Me? I will leave here when I am ready."

Then the Mughal ruler got up but he did not see Shri Nathji. He was left with the mark of Shri Nathji's lotus feet on his back exactly where Shri Nathji had hit him. That mark stayed with him for as long as he lived, but he never told anyone about it. He kept it all within his heart. He always worshipped Shri Nathji secretly and lived on barley roti breads and green vegetables. He always slept on the floor. He did all of these austerities in the hope of having Shri Nathji's darshan.

THE COMPLETE STORY OF SHRI NAVANITA PRIYAJI'S TRIP TO AGRA

Shri Govindaji and his two brothers brought Shri Nathji to Agra. Shri Navanita Priya resided in Gokul at that time. They sent some men to bring Shri Navanita Priyaji, the image of Child Krishna, to Agra and told them, "Also bring Shri Dauji and all the women of the family to Agra. Tell the priest, Govinda Dubeji, to bring Navanita Priyaji to Agra."

Having received the message, Govinda Dubeji bathed and tried to awaken Navanita Priyaji by sounding the conch at about 9 p.m. He remained fast asleep. Then Govinda Dubeji made great efforts to awaken Navanita Priyaji, but Navanita Priyaji would not get up. Then he took hold of Navanita Priyaji's hand, but even then Navanita Priyaji would not get up from His bed. Then Dubeji knew that it was not Navanita Priyaji's wish to wake up at that time.

He thought, "We will have to wake Him up in the morning."



After considering the situation, he took rest in Navanita Priyaji's courtyard. One hour before sunrise, Dube took another bath and, after making an offering, he awoke Navanita Priyaji. After offering Navanita Priyaji His breakfast, he made His ornamentation and then placed Him in a palanquin. With the help of several temple cooks and water carriers, they reached Go Ghat some time later. There, Shri Gusainji's third son, Shri Bal Krishna, and his grandson, Shri Brajarayaji, were waiting for them. Shri Brajarayaji had received the boon from Navanita Priyaji that, "One day, I will have lunch from your hand." The story of that boon is given below.

Shri Gusainji and all of the lineage holders, as well as the temple servants were in the practice of leaving the temple after Navanita Priyaji was put to sleep. Then all the wives and daughters of Shri Gusainji's seven sons would go to touch Navanita Priyaji's feet. The wife of Shri Pitambarji, Shri Bal Krishna's son, would always be the last to touch Navanita Priyaji's feet.

Once Navanita Priyaji told her, "I will come to your house."

She put Navanita Priyaji in her blouse and brought Him to her house. Navanita Priyaji stayed in her house almost the entire night. Just before sunrise, Navanita Priyaji told her, "Bring Me back to Shri Gusainji's house. If Shri Giridhariji does not find Me in the temple, he will be distressed."

Meanwhile, Shri Giridhariji and his brother, Shri Gokulnathji, had gone to awaken Navanita Priyaji. When they entered Navanita Priyaji's sleeping quarters and did not find Him there, both of them wondered, "What has happened?"

Shri Giridhariji then said, "There must be some good reason for this. Shri Gusainji has given me Navanita Priyaji so Navanita Priyaji cannot leave this place."

After saying that, both brothers sat outside the temple under the triple arches and meditated upon Shri Gusainji in their hearts.



By that time Navanita Priyaji again told Pitambarji's wife, "Return Me quickly to the temple."

She asked Navanita Priyaji, "Stay here for lunch, then leave."

Navanita Priyaji declined, but added, "In the future, while I am running away from here, I will take lunch from your son, Shri Brajarayaji. Now bring Me back to My bed. Go right now so no one will see you."

She followed Navanita Priyaji's orders and put Navanita Priyaji back into His bed in the temple and returned home. Then Giridhariji entered the temple, awoke Navanita Priyaji and offered Him His breakfast.

So, years later, Shri Brajarayaji remembered the boon he received from Navanita Priyaji. He knew that Navanita Priyaji was coming to Go Ghat later that morning. Before Navanita Priyaji's arrival, he prepared His lunch and went to wait in the middle of the road. When he saw Navanita Priyaji's palanquin arrive, he told Vitthal Dube, "Navanita Priyaji is hungry, so I have prepared His lunch. Navanita Priyaji will go on to Agra after He has had His meal."

At that place, Navanita Priyaji partook of His lunch. When Navanita Priyaji had finished His lunch and the offering was taken away, then Shri Brajarayaji said, "I will perform my prayers by the Yamuna river. Dube, you stay with great attention by Navanita Priyaji."

Shri Brajarayaji then went to the Yamuna with his attendants. Then Dube gave Navanita Priyaji a betel leaf and washed His hands and mouth. He placed Navanita Priyaji in the palanquin and quickly proceeded to Agra. They reached Shri Nathji's temple in Agra three hours after sunset. There, Shri Govinda, Shri Bal Krishna, Shri Vallabhji, Shri Dauji and all their wives and sisters were very worried, but when they finally saw Navanita Priyaji, they became



very pleased. They offered Navanita Priyaji His afternoon and supper offerings and then put Him to rest.

Afterwards, Shri Govindaji called Dubeji and said, "You have brought my all and everything, my Navanita Priyaji. Ask of me whatever you want. Then Dubeji said, "Maharaja, I wish that my lineage will never experience a break in the worship of Shri Nathji and Navanita Priyaji."

Shri Govindaji replied, "So it will be. As long as my lineage continues, Shri Nathji will never turn His back on your lineage."

SHRI GOVINDAJI'S WISH IS FOLLOWED BY THE EMPEROR'S MESSENGER AND, AFTER THE SECRET ANNAKUTA IS CELEBRATED, THEY MOVE ONWARDS

Then Shri Govindaji told the emperor's messenger, "Until I celebrate the Annakuta festival here in Agra, don't inform the emperor of our presence."

That messenger, being Shri Govindaji's disciple, did not inform the emperor until after the Annakuta festival was celebrated. They celebrated Annakuta secretly. They offered rice and all other foods according to the festival calendar and very quietly worshipped the Govardhan Hill.

SHRI NATHJI GOES TO DANDOTI GHAT

After the Annakuta festival, Shri Nathji said, "Now I will go to Dandoti Ghat. Gangabai, make the preparations."

Gangabai said to Shri Govindaji, "Put Shri Nathji in the chariot."

Then Shri Govindaji put Shri Nathji in the chariot and proceeded towards Dandoti Ghat. They left after waving the Raja Bhoga arati. As they left, a Mughal was sitting by the door, but



Shri Nathji made it so he could not see anything; he became blind. They arrived at their camp two hours before sunset and there Shri Nathji took His blissful rest.

THE MESSENGER TELLS OF SHRI NATHJI'S COMING TO AGRA

On the following day, the messenger gave the message to the emperor. He said, "Emperor, last night Shri Nathji, Who left the Govardhan Hill, came to Agra and stayed in a house here. This morning, Shri Nathji left and we don't know to where."

Hearing those words the emperor said, "How did you know that Shri Nathji came here?"

The messenger then explained, "By the house where Shri Nathji stayed, we found many used leaf plates and there was also a lot of water flowing in the gutters. From those signs we were able to tell that Shri Nathji had been there. You see, only the people from Gokul use so much water and leaf plates."

Hearing that, the emperor laughed and told the messenger, "Shri Nathji has been in Agra for many days. They left here three days ago. I knew from the day they came to Agra. I am not His enemy. I gave an order and now wherever He wants to play, let Him. Don't tell anyone what I said. If my religious heads hear about this, they will go after Shri Nathji."

MANY MUGHALS CHASE AFTER SHRI NATHJI

When the emperor asked to see a miracle and did not see one, his religious leader, the head "mulla", decided that they would destroy Shri Nathji's temple. He had a force of five hundred men and when he heard that Shri Nathji, Who lived on the Govardhan Hill, had gone to Dandoti Ghat, he took his forces with him and pursued Shri Nathji. At that time the emperor advised him, "Don't chase after Shri Nathji. He is very powerful. Shri Nathji left the



Govardhan Hill because of His own wish. I did not make Him leave.”

But the religious leader did not listen to the emperor’s advice and went out after Shri Nathji. During that night, Shri Nathji’s chariot was on the other side of the Chambal River.

When only three hours of night remained, Shri Nathji’s chariot suddenly stopped. Shri Govindaji inspired Ganga Bai to ask Shri Nathji, “Now, what is Your wish?”

Shri Nathji said, “Make My worship here. Today I will stay by the banks of the Chambal River.”

A short while later, the Mughal army arrived on the other side of the river while Shri Govindaji was preparing for the afternoon Utthapan offering. Seeing the Mughals, he became concerned and said to Ganga Bai, “Tell Nathji that the Mughals are positioned on the other side of the river. What should I do about the Utthapan offering?”

When Ganga Bai asked Shri Nathji what to do, He replied, “Quickly make Utthapan. Why are you worried about those Mughals? If they come here, I will take care of them.”

Then they blew the conch and without any concern started to make Shri Nathji’s seva while the Mughals stood on the other side of the river. When they saw Shri Nathji’s chariot, it appeared as a large mountain. Meanwhile, all the men with Shri Nathji appeared as large lions to them. They did not see a single man there. When the Mughals saw all those lions, they said to each other, “It looks like there are only lions over there. We don’t see a single man.”

When the Braja Vasis were speaking with each other, their voices seemed like the roar of many lions to the Mughals. Hearing lions, they said to each other, “We should quickly leave this place before those roaring lions come and devour us!”



When the Mughals saw the water boys and the pot cleaners come to the river to get water, they said to each other, “Those lions are coming to devour us. We must flee.”

They all fled in such fear that some of them lost their clothes, while others stumbled over each other. Somehow they managed to get to Agra in one night. Later the “mulla” mentioned to the emperor, “That Shri Nathji is very powerful. We fled for our lives with great difficulty. From today onwards, I will not even speak His name.”

The emperor replied, “I told you before not to chase Shri Nathji. That God is full of miracles. Why did you attack Him?”

SHRI NATHJI TELLS GANGABAI THAT HE WANTS TO GO TO KRISHNAPUR

On the following day, Shri Nathji told Gangabai, “Tell Shri Govindaji that I want to cross the Chambal River and go towards Dandoti Ghat.”

Beyond Dandoti Ghat is the town of Krishnapur. There Shri Nathji decided to stay.

SHRI GUSAINJI GIVES BAL KRISHNA A BOON

While Shri Gusainji was alive, during Shri Krishna’s appearance day festivities, Shri Gusainji’s third son, Shri Bal Krishna, got dressed up as mother Yashoda before the deity of Child Krishna, Shri Navanita Priyaji, in Gokul. During the festivities he became immersed in *bhava* while he swung Navanita Priyaji in the cradle, and sang the following song:

Mother Yashoda takes Krishna into her lap
And milk flows from her breasts.



You are blessed, mother of Krishna,
O queen of Braja.

At that time, milk flowed from Shri Bal Krishna's breast. He then took Navanita Priyaji from the cradle into his lap. Seeing this, Shri Gusainji took hold of Navanita Priyaji and put Him back into the cradle. Shri Gusainji knew that Bal Krishna was filled with a great *bhava* and that mother Yashoda had entered into his son. He became very pleased and said to his son, "Ask of me whatever you desire."

Bal Krishna requested, "I would like to have this bhava during every Janmashtami celebration. Also I would like to have Shri Nathji's seva for some time."

Shri Gusainji replied, "Granted. Every Janmashtami you will be filled with Yashoda, but your elder brother, Shri Giridhariji, has Shri Nathji's seva because Shri Nathji grabbed his hand. And in the future, when Shri Nathji goes to another land, your great grandson, Shri Brajarayaji, will make Shri Nathji's seva for twenty-seven days. On the twenty-eighth day, Shri Govindaji, from your older brother Shri Giridhariji's lineage, will take Shri Nathji's seva back from him." This was the boon that Shri Gusainji gave to Shri Bal Krishna.

FROM THE BOON, BRAJARAYAJI MAKES SEVA FOR TWENTY- SEVEN DAYS

Bal Krishna's son was Pitamber, and his son was Shri Shyamlal, and his son was Brajarayaji. Brajarayaji often stayed with the emperor. One day the emperor became pleased with him and said, "Brajarayaji, ask of me whatever you desire. You have attended me a great deal and have been with me for four years."

Brajarayaji requested, "Shri Nathji has left the Govardhan Hill and I desire to make His seva."



The emperor replied, "No, Shri Nathji's seva should continue the way it has been. But you have pleased me very much and for that reason your wish will not go unanswered. Take my forces to where Shri Nathji is and you may stay there for one month in the service of Shri Nathji. But know that you will not be able to make Shri Nathji's seva for more than one month."

Then Brajarayaji took some of the emperor's forces and came to Dandoti Ghat, where Shri Nathji was staying at Krishnapur.

SHRI NATHJI TELLS GANGABAI ABOUT BRAJARAYAJI'S ARRIVAL AND BOON

Knowing of Shri Brajarayaji's arrival, Shri Nathji told Gangabai, "Tell Shri Govindaji that he should leave and go to a town twenty miles from here with his entire family and followers. He will find a large house there. He should stay for one month. Brajarayaji is coming here with many men and has secured the emperor's order to make seva for twenty-seven days. This is all due to an old boon that Shri Gusainji gave to his forefather. On the twenty-eighth day, he will come and take the seva from Brajarayaji. Then Shri Govindaji will again perform My seva."

GANGABAI TELLS GOVINDAJI SHRI NATHJI'S COMMAND

Gangabai told Govindaji of Shri Nathji's wish, explaining that "Shri Nathji is able to do, not do, or do otherwise. Know that everything that happens is due to His wish. As Shri Gusainji experienced Shri Nathji's separation in the month of Ashar, so you have been awarded twenty-seven days of separation. You must act according to Shri Nathji's will."



SHRI GOVINDA'S TWENTY-SEVEN DAYS OF SEPARATION

Upon hearing that, Shri Govindaji contemplated Shri Mahaprabhuji's teachings:

Wisdom is knowing that everything happens according to the wish of Hari. There is no use for prayer. There should never be any doubt regarding Krishna's intentions.

Shri Govindaji then considered, "So I should not pray to Shri Nathji. What power does Brajarayaji have that allows him to take Shri Nathji's seva from me? But it is Shri Gusainji's old boon that for twenty-seven days he will make the seva and on the twenty-eighth day I will come and take his place. Then once again I will serve Shri Nathji."

Then Shri Govindaji and his entire family and following stayed in a nearby town. Shri Nathji would go there daily and give Ganga Bai His darshan. The separation they felt was like the separation the Braja Bhaktas felt when Shri Krishna disappeared from them. They experienced great separation and searched for Krishna everywhere. They even asked the trees and creepers in the forest where their Beloved went. In a similar fashion, Shri Govindaji went from town to town trying to find his Shri Nathji.

Only a few water boys and pot cleaners stayed with Shri Nathji. Everyone else went with Shri Govindaji. During the time Brajarayaji made Shri Nathji's seva, Shri Govindaji abstained from all grains and lived on fruits. In the morning, he would dress up as a yogi and wear deer and tiger skins. He appeared like he was a forest recluse. He covered his body with ash. There was a tailor called Rorda who made Shri Nathji's clothes. He was a very good *sarangi* player and became Shri Govindaji's yogi disciple. He also dressed up like a renounced yogi. While the tailor played the *sarangi* they would wander about singing the following song in the raga Ashavari:



O friend, where can we find Krishna?
He is the One Who lives in the forest.

Now my heart feels like
Wandering like a yogi.

Both of them kept singing this song to the accompaniment of the *sarangi*. They did not know where Shri Nathji went and so they wandered from house to house saying, "We have lost a young Boy. Have you seen Him? If you have, please tell us."

So, in this extreme state of separation, Shri Govindaji went searching for Shri Nathji for twenty-seven days, but no one was able to tell him where his Lord was.

ON THE TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY, GOVINDAJI REMOVES BRAJARAYAJI FROM SHRI NATHJI'S SEVA

On the twenty-eighth day, Govindaji and Rorda, the tailor, both came to a lake by Krishnapur and sat down. At that time, Shri Nathji's lunch had been offered. Two water boys then came to that lake to wash some of Shri Nathji's rice pots and saw Shri Govindaji. They did not recognize him because he was dressed like a yogi. While they were washing the pots, they mentioned to each other, "In Shri Brajarayaji's entire family, there is no one strong enough to remove Shri Govindaji from Shri Nathji's seva. Shri Vitthalraya has four sons and among them Shri Govindaji is very powerful. But at this time I don't know where he has gone. Brajarayaji had an army with him when he took over Shri Nathji's seva. If he did not have those forces, Shri Govindaji would have just grabbed hold of him and removed him."

Overhearing their conversation, Shri Govindaji went to the water boys and asked them, "Tell me, do you know where Shri Nathji is? My name is Govindaji."



Having said that, he removed his yogi dress, bathed and put on a *dhoti* and a shawl. He put a dagger in his belt, covered it with his shawl and followed the water boys back to the temple. At that time the garland was called for in Shri Nathji's seva. Brajarayaji had filled Shri Nathji's water pitcher and washed His hands. The morning seva was about to be completed. Brajarayaji stood ready to wave Shri Nathji's *arati* lights when, suddenly, Shri Govindaji appeared. With one hand he took the knife from his belt and showed it to Brajaraya and said, "We have both arrived upon the great battle field of death. This will all occur in front of Shri Nathji. When it is over, someone else will have to wave Shri Nathji's *arati*. You have served Shri Nathji for many days. Now save yourself and leave. If you do not, I will stab you in the stomach and then I will stab myself. I will not allow you to make any more seva. My son, Shri Dauji will make Shri Nathji's seva."

Shri Govindaji was a very powerful man and his threat frightened Shri Brajarayaji so much that he began to tremble. With eyes filled with tears and folded hands, he submitted, "Don't kill me. I will leave immediately. You should care for Shri Nathji."

Having said that, he quickly left and returned to Agra where he met the emperor. After he told him everything, the emperor said, "From this day forward do not return there."

Meanwhile, Shri Govindaji called his entire family back to Shri Nathji. His son Dauji and all the wives, daughters, and the rest of his family came to Shri Nathji and everyone touched His feet. Everyone present was very pleased. Shri Nathji, seeing his family, was also blissful. For all the days that Shri Brajarayaji made seva, Shri Nathji was not pleased. But on that day, Shri Govindaji, Shri Bal Krishnaji, Shri Vallabhji and Shri Dauji all gathered together and made Shri Nathji's ornamentation. On that day, Shri Nathji gave them all a divine darshan.



A DESCRIPTION OF HOW SHRI NATHJI WENT TO MEVAR

While travelling to Mevar, Shri Nathji spent His first rainy season at Dandoti Ghat. Seeing the large houses there, Shri Nathji was very happy and thought, "Although this place is very nice, I will leave here."

Shri Nathji then told Gangabai what He wanted to do and then He sat in the chariot and proceeded onwards. Shri Govindaji and his brothers were with Him. In the morning, one brother went ahead to set up the camp for the evening. He took the cook and the water boy with him and made everything ready for the Utthapan afternoon offering. Meanwhile, after Shri Govindaji made Shri Nathji's *arati*, they would all leave the camp and head out towards the next one. Shri Nathji arrived at the next camp about two hours before sunset and found everything ready there. Then they quickly made the afternoon and evening worship before putting Shri Nathji to rest. The next morning, after making Shri Nathji's breakfast, ornamentation and lunch offerings, everyone took their *prasada* before proceeding toward the next camp.

Meanwhile, Shri Vallabhji went to the next camp and made everything ready. The other two brothers went with Shri Nathji. Shri Govindaji rode on a horse in front of Shri Nathji's chariot while Shri Bal Krishnaji rode on a horse behind Shri Nathji. He would wear five weapons on his body as well as armor and appeared very valiant and exhilarated. If any king or noble person along the way asked about Shri Nathji and the chariot, Shri Govindaji said, "Shri Nathji lives forever in a cave on the Govardhan Hill. Our own personal items are stored in this chariot."

Govindaji did not allow anyone darshan of Shri Nathji. In 1669, in the month of Ashvin, on a Friday during full moon day, Shri Nathji left the Govardhan Hill. He arrived in Sinhand in 1672 during the month of Phalgun, on the seventh day of the dark half



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of the month on a Saturday. There in Sinhand, Shri Nathji was established in His temple. It took Him two and a half years to make the trip in His chariot from Braja to Mevar. During that period of travel, Shri Vallabh prepared the vegetables and did the cooking with his own hands. He also ground the flour by hand. His brother, Bal Krishna, made the fried foods as well as the foods that were milk preparations with the help of the daughters and the other women of the family. Many cows travelled with Shri Nathji and provided Him with ample milk and curds.

FROM DANDOTI GHAT SHRI NATHJI PROCEEDS TO KOTA-BUNDI

From Dandoti Ghat, Shri Nathji proceeded to Kota-Bundi. Aniruddha Singh was the king there. He came for darshan and, knowing him to be a Vaishnava, Shri Govindaji allowed him the darshan of Shri Nathji. Then the king requested, "Ask Shri Nathji to remain in my kingdom. This is a very nice area and I have a force of five thousand warriors. If the Mughals attack, I will fight them."

Then Shri Govinda said, "You are a Vaishanva, so we will find a nice place and will stay here for some time. But when it is Shri Nathji's wish, we will leave. We will not always reside here because you do not have a very large kingdom."

In the kingdom of Kota at Krishnavilas, near a rock marked with a lotus, Shri Nathji stayed for the four months of the rainy season.

SHRI NATHJI LEAVES KOTA AND, ON THE WAY TO JODHPUR, PASSES PUSHKAR

Shri Nathji stayed the rainy season at Kota and then proceeded to Jodhpur. They passed through Pushkar along the way. When



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they were close to the Pushkar Lake, Shri Nathji's chariot suddenly stopped. Then Govindaji told Ganga Bai, "Ask Shri Nathji why the chariot stopped. Discover His wish."

Then she went inside the chariot and after delighting over Shri Nathji's face, she asked Him, "Why did You stop the chariot?"

Shri Nathji replied, "There is a lake nearby that has blooming lotuses. I can smell them. Quickly bring some of those lotuses. Once they are brought here and I smell them, I will move on to wherever I desire."

Then a few Braja Vasis proceeded to the Pushkar Lake where they saw many red and white lotuses blooming. They put them into lotus leaves and quickly brought them to Shri Nathji and stood by the chariot. Then Shri Govindaji arranged for them to be offered to Shri Nathji. He explained, "Shri Nathji wanted these lotuses. He loves lotuses."

First Shri Bal Krishna and Shri Vallabhji offered some lotuses to Shri Nathji and then Shri Dauji was called for the offering. He was a young boy at that time. Then the women of the family came and offered them to Shri Nathji.

ON THE WAY TO JODHPUR FROM PUSHKAR SHRI NATHJI GOES TO KRISHNAGARH

The king of Krishnagarh was Rup Singh. He was a disciple of Shri Vittheleshwarji. The king was killed in a battle he fought against the emperor. Before he left his body, he told his attendant to bring a diamond to Shri Nathji Who resided on the Govardhan Hill. After the king died, that attendant went to Shri Nathji's temple and offered the king's diamond. On that day, after the midday darshan, he came down from the Govardhan Hill. By the Dandavati rock he saw his deceased king wearing a yellow "pitambar" cloth around his neck and a saffron shawl. He was adorned with tilak



marks. He seemed as bright as God. His worldly body was left on the battlefield while his divine body went to Shri Nathji's temple. Everyone saw him enter the temple, but no one saw him leave. Then everyone said, "King Rup Singh has truly entered Shri Nathji's lila."

When Shri Nathji arrived there, Rup Singh's son, Man Singh, was the ruling king of Krishnagarh. When he heard that Shri Nathji had arrived in his kingdom, he considered, "Shri Nathji is my family deity. I must not partake of any food or water until I have had Shri Nathji's darshan."

When he came for Shri Nathji's darshan, Shri Nathji's chariot was in the nearby town of Ujad. A dense forest of Dhak trees stood close by. There was also a beautiful lake and a river flowed from a spring on a nearby mountain. In this beautiful place, Shri Nathji's chariot came to a halt. When Raja Man Singh came to see Shri Nathji, Shri Govindaji, knowing him to be a Vaishnava, allowed him Shri Nathji's darshan. The king then said, "If you display Shri Nathji's presence here, the Mughals will come to know. But if you stay here in secrecy, then I am ever ready to be in your service."

Then Shri Govindaji had Gangabai ask Shri Nathji what He felt about the situation and Shri Nathji replied, "This place is very beautiful; there are many Dhak trees and Kesu flowers. I will spend the spring season here and will then move onwards. I will not live here."

Shri Nathji celebrated the Dol festival and stayed there for the entire spring season as well as for some of the hot season before proceeding on towards Mevar.



WHILE GOING TO MEVAR, SHRI NATHJI GIVES A RENUNCIATE DARSHAN AT VISALPURA

On the way from Braja to Jodhpur there is a town called Visalpura where a renunciate and his disciple lived. Once, when Shri Nathji resided on the Govardhan Hill, a guru and his disciple came to bathe in the Ganga. After bathing in the Ganga, they went to the Govardhan Hill. The guru climbed the Govardhan Hill while the disciple, who had read the *Shrimad Bhagavata*, remembered the following sloka:

Krishna then took on a huge form, amazed the cow lads and said, "I am the Govardhan Hill." He then ate the offerings.

So the disciple thought, "The Govardhan Hill is spoken of in the *Bhagavata* in such an exalted manner. How can I place my foot on top of the sacred hill?"

While he was considering this, his guru returned from Shri Nathji's temple on top of the Govardhan Hill and praised the darshan he had of Shri Nathji saying, "Shri Nathji is very beautiful."

When the disciple heard about Shri Nathji's darshan from his guru, he went to the Govardhan Hill, but felt very uncomfortable about placing his foot on top of the hill. Yet, the desire to have Shri Nathji's darshan was lodged in his heart. He was very distressed and for three days he was undecided about going up to see Shri Nathji while he stayed by the Govardhan Hill with his guru. The disciple encircled the Govardhan Hill, but never did have the darshan of Shri Nathji. He was very upset about the situation. After some time, the guru passed away and the disciple became a renunciate guru and lived in Visalpura. Once, Shri Nathji appeared in his dream and told him, "I am the Deity you wanted to have the darshan of but did not because you did not want to climb the Govardhan Hill. Tomorrow I am coming around your town with My chariot. Come before My chariot and tell Shri



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Govindaji, 'Allow me to have darshan.' When he refuses you My darshan, then describe to him what I will be wearing. Tell him that I am adorned with a white turban and a white Pichhora dress and that Shri Nathji is definitely in the chariot and then add, 'Please, you must allow me darshan.' Then he will allow you My darshan. You should also make a table for Me. I will eat My meals on it. Bring it with you and place it before My chariot. I will daily eat My lunch on that table."

The following morning, the renunciate arose and called a carpenter and told him, "I have twenty-five buffalo. You may take the best of the group but I need you to make a table right now."

Then the carpenter made a table in three hours and gave it to the renunciate. The renunciate then took the table with him and sat in the middle of the road. Towards the end of the afternoon, he saw Shri Nathji's chariot in the distance. He then went before the chariot and stood in the middle of the road and said, "When you allow me Shri Nathji's darshan I will get out of your way."

Everyone thought he must be some messenger sent from the emperor and that he was trying to trick them. Then Shri Govindaji replied, "Shri Nathji always resides within a cave on the Govardhan Hill. We are only carrying our personal items in this chariot."

Then the renunciate replied, "Last night, Shri Nathji appeared in my dream and told me to make a table for His lunch. So I have prepared it and brought it for Shri Nathji. Please take it and also allow me Shri Nathji's darshan. He is now adorned with a white turban as well as a white Pichhora dress."

Hearing the renunciate's words, Shri Govindaji knew that he was an experienced bhakta and decided to allow him Shri Nathji's darshan. Then he told everyone, "Today we will make the afternoon Utthapan offering here."

The camp was made there. During the afternoon Utthapan darshan, the renunciate had the darshan of Shri Nathji. Shri Nathji



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stayed in that town that night and the next day. After the Raj Bhog arati was waved, Shri Nathji headed off on His journey towards Jodhpur. However, the table that the renunciate had made was left behind. They reasoned, "What use is that table now? We should not be held up by that renunciate's table. It was his desire that it be made for Shri Nathji and Shri Nathji has eaten off of it once. Let us just leave it here by the road and head onwards. The renunciate will take it."

Having said that, they left the table there and quickly headed onwards. Then the same renunciate came to the place where Shri Nathji had been and saw that Shri Nathji had gone and that His table was left behind. He became very sad and thought, "Shri Nathji told me in the dream to make Him a table and now He has not accepted it. What is the reason?"

He began to think about it as he picked up the table and brought it to his house and established it in a prominent place there. He sat down and became sullen. Meanwhile, Shri Nathji's chariot proceeded six miles from Visalpur and suddenly got stuck.

They tried many remedies to free the chariot, but Shri Nathji's chariot would not budge. Then Govindaji said to Gangabai, "Ask Shri Nathji why He stopped the chariot in this desolate place where there are no villages for miles and where there is not even any water or shade?"

Then Gangabai spoke to Shri Nathji, "Baliharilal, why did You stop the chariot? Why don't You move?"

Then Shri Nathji replied, "I am distressed about the table that I told that renunciate to make for Me. You left it where I had My lunch yesterday. I will only move forward when that table is brought here. I will daily take My lunch on that table."

After hearing what Shri Nathji told Gangabai, Shri Govindaji became very concerned and immediately sent two Braja Vasis on



horseback to retrieve the table. He told them, "If that table is still there, then quickly bring it here. If someone has taken it, then go to that renunciate and tell him, 'You are very fortunate. Shri Nathji Himself has accepted your table. Now make another one and give it to us.' If he has the one that Shri Nathji ate off of, then bring that one here."

With those instructions, the two Braja Vasis headed out. Galloping on their horses, in thirty minutes they reached the place where Shri Nathji had taken His lunch on the previous day. They did not see the table so they went to the renunciate's house and told him everything. The renunciate then presented them with the table and they returned to Shri Nathji as fast as they had gone there and presented it to Shri Govindaji. Since that table was made with respect to Shri Nathji's expressed wish, all the lineage holders took the darshan of it and, after touching it, they placed their hands to their eyes as a sign of respect.

From that day forward, they took special care of that table. Whenever Shri Nathji was ready to leave His camp, He would remind them to take it. As long as Shri Nathji did not reside in a permanent temple, He would daily partake of His lunch on that table. After that table was returned to Shri Nathji, the chariot was able to move forward.

SHRI NATHJI GOES TO JODHPUR AND SPENDS THE RAINY SEASON AT CHAUPASENI

From there, Shri Nathji went to Jodhpur. When Shri Nathji arrived there, the king, Raja Jasavant Singh, had gone to the Kamauke mountain to see his in-laws. At that time, his minister was present. He came for Shri Nathji's darshan and explained, "The king has been away for eight days. I will inform him of the good news."



There is a town called Chaupaseni six miles from Jodpur. In the nearby town of Chareban, there is a grove of Kadam trees where Shri Nathji decided to stay for the four months of the rainy season. Since Shri Nathji left the Govardhan Hill for Mevar, three rainy seasons had passed. One rainy season was spent at Dandoti Ghat. The second rainy season was spent in Kota at Krishnavilas and the third, in Jodhpur at Chaupaseni. For the fourth rainy season, Shri Nathji reached His temple in Mevar.

Shri Nathji left the Govardhan Hill in the year 1669 on the full moon in the bright half of the month of Ashvin, and arrived in Mevar in the year 1672, in Phalgun during the seventh day of the dark half of the month. He purified the lands He passed through in His travels: Hindmulatan, Dandoti Ghat, Bundi-Kota, Dundar and, in Mevar, Bansavada, Dungarapura and Shahpura. It took Shri Nathji two years four months and seven days to travel from the Govardhan Hill to Mevar in His chariot.

SHRI GOVINDA GOES TO UDAIPURA AND, AFTER SPEAKING WITH KING RANA SINGHJI, DECIDES TO HAVE SHRI NATHJI LIVE IN MEVAR

While Shri Nathji was residing in Chaupaseni for the rainy season, Shri Govindaji went to Udaipura to meet with the king, Shri Rana Singhji. He told the king about Shri Nathji's plans to reside in Mevar. The king then asked his aged mother, "Shri Nathji has moved from Braja due to the threat of the Mughals and has decided that He wants to reside here. If it is your wish, then I will arrange for Shri Nathji to reside here. But if the Mughals hear that Shri Nathji is living here, they will attack. Tell me what is my duty here."

The queen then said, "Listen, my son. Through the fortune of Mirabai and Ajaba Kunvari, Shri Nathji has decided to come to our land. Where can we find such fortune? Quickly arrange to bring Shri Nathji here. Don't delay. If the emperor decides to



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attack, then remember that you are a warrior. If you will give your life for land, then why even consider that you would not give your life for God? Bring Shri Nathji here quickly!”

Hearing her words, the king was pleased and he told Shri Govinda, “Immediately bring Shri Nathji here.”

Then Shri Govindaji returned to Chaupaseni and asked Shri Nathji what He wanted to do. Shri Nathji replied, “I will go to Mevar. The rainy season has passed. After celebrating Annakuta, I will proceed to Mevar.”

THE FULL ACCOUNT OF SHRI NATHJI'S TRIP TO MEVAR

Then, in the year 1671, on the full moon during the month of Kartik, Shri Nathji headed towards Mevar. Along the way, they came to a town and there they made the afternoon offering of Utthapan and the evening offering as well. There was a very deep lake nearby. On that day, Shri Nathji partook of the lake's water. Later that night, the sounds of someone calling “Victory! Victory!” resounded from around the lake.

Everyone who was with Shri Nathji heard the calls, but they did not see anyone. Then everyone got together and went to the lake where they heard the voices and asked in the direction of the sound, “Who are you that is calling, ‘Victory! Victory!’?”

Then, an answer came from the lake. “We are one hundred thousand ghosts who have lived in this lake for the past thousand years in bondage. Shri Nathji has partaken of the waters here today and, because of that act alone, a celestial car came from the eternal realm of Vaikuntha and we were told, ‘All ghosts that live in this lake now put on divine bodies, sit in this celestial car and come to Vaikuntha.’ In this way the Lord of Vaikuntha spoke to us. He has transported us to the divine realm. Because Shri Nathji partook of the water from this lake, all of the ghosts who have lived here



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for thousands of years have become liberated today. This is the reason we are calling out, ‘Victory! Victory!’ for Shri Nathji.”

Hearing this, Shri Govinda and all who were with him were astonished.

Later they moved on from that town and arrived in Sinhad twenty-three days later. As Shri Nathji wandered from place to place, many amazing events occurred, but here we only reveal the main ones. The account would be very long otherwise.

Later, Shri Nathji's chariot got stuck under a Pepal tree. There Shri Govindaji asked Shri Nathji what He wanted. Shri Nathji replied, “This is where Ajaba Kunvari lived. My temple will be built here; I will live here. It is the king's wish that I go to Udaipura, but that will occur in the future. Now build a temple here on Ajaba Kunvari's land and I will live here for some time. This place reminds Me of Braja. I like the mountain here. Have all the lineage holders build their own places here.”

Then Shri Govindaji began to make the temple ready. He ordered the carpenter, Gopaldas, “Quickly build Shri Nathji's temple. Bring many men for the work and swiftly make it ready.”

Much of the stone for the temple was available from the nearby mountains. After preparing the cement, the foundation was laid. The workers worked day and night and, with the help of a thousand workers, the temple was completed in a few months.

In 1672, during the month of Phalgun, on the seventh day of the dark half of the month, on a Saturday, Shri Damodarji Maharaj, who was also called Shri Dauji, established Shri Nathji in the temple according to Vedic rites. He performed the *punyahavan* sacrifice as well as the *vastupratishtha* for the occasion. From that day, Shri Nathji resided blissfully in Mevar. Shri Dauji then established all the same food offerings and festivals that Shri Nathji had had when He was on the Govardhan Hill. A cow shed was also prepared for all of Shri Nathji's cows. Shri Dauji served Shri Nathji very



lovingly. He himself adorned Shri Nathji and celebrated all the holidays and festivals with Shri Nathji.

THE EMPEROR HEARS THAT SHRI NATHJI IS IN MEVAR AND ATTACKS RANA SINGHJI

Four years later, the emperor asked his messenger, "Where does that deity, Shri Nathji, Who moved from the Govardhan Hill, live now? Is Shri Nathji residing within my kingdom or somewhere else?"

The messenger started to search for Shri Nathji in Marvad and Mevar. Wherever Shri Nathji had resided, the messenger visited. After discovering Shri Nathji's whereabouts, he returned to the emperor and said, "Shri Nathji lives in the kingdom of Ranaji in Udaipura. Ranaji lives standing with folded hands before Shri Nathji. He is under Shri Nathji's control."

Hearing that, the emperor said, "Shri Nathji is supposed to live in my kingdom. So, wherever He goes, that is also my kingdom, all the way to the ocean. He has left my kingdom and has gone to Ranaji's kingdom. So, I will go to Rana's kingdom just to see."

Having said that, the emperor prepared himself and arrived in Mevar a few days later. Knowing of this, Rana Singhji sent his entire family away while the king took forty thousand troops and camped at Nahar. On that day the emperor made his camp at the Rayasagar.

THE EMPEROR'S FORCES CAMP AT RAYASAGAR WHILE RANAJI'S FORCES CAMP AT NAHAR AND SHRI NATHJI GOES TO BATARA

Shri Nathji told Gangabai, "Tell Shri Dauji about the town of Batara. It is by the Batara River and is a very beautiful place. Many types of flowering vines and trees grow there, like Kevar,



Ketaki, Dambeli and Rayabela. I certainly want to see that place. In the nearby mountain there is a cave and in that cave lives a sage who has been doing austerities for thousands of years. He has a desire in his heart and prays, 'I hope Shri Krishna will appear before me in this cave. Then I will leave this place and will force my life breath to leave from the top of my head. Then I will ascend to the place where time has no reach.' So, for thousands of years, that sage has been sitting there waiting for My darshan. I want to meet him, so let us move towards that place. I will stay there for three days. Then I will return to My temple. The emperor will stay at Rayasagar until My return. Then he will move away."

Gangabai told all of this to Dauji. Dauji Maharaj was a powerful man. He immediately made the chariot ready and, after Shri Nathji sat down in the chariot, he headed out for Batara. Whenever the road became rough, due to Shri Nathji's wish, the path would suddenly become straight and easy. When the road became very rough, Dauji Maharaj would place quilts filled with cotton down before the chariot to ensure that Shri Nathji would not be rocked. In this way, Shri Nathji came to rest on that hill and, upon seeing the mountain, He was very pleased. Shri Nathji stayed there for three days. On the first day, the afternoon and evening offerings were completed there. On the following day, while Shri Nathji was staying there, the doors to the temple were left open during one of the offerings. It was at that time that the renounced sage came out from his cave in order to have Shri Nathji's darshan. Upon seeing Shri Nathji, he bowed and offered a garland of blue lotuses that are not found anywhere upon the earth, but only in the divine realm, a place to which the sage had access. He presented them to Shri Nathji. After he had prepared the garland, the sage considered, "When Shri Nathji comes here, I will adorn Him with this garland. I will also offer Shri Nathji a three pound piece of pure sandal wood."



The sage's sandal wood was very pure and so strong that if you were to pour a tiny amount of it into fifty kilos of hot water, the sandalwood would cool all of that boiling water. He offered that sandalwood to Shri Nathji and, after bowing down to Him, he left the mountain. The grace of God was upon him and the servants of Vishnu arrived for him. They put him in a celestial car and took him to Vaikuntha. Then Shri Nathji told Shri Dauji, "During the hot season, offer Me a bowl of sandalpaste and always use the renunciate's piece of sandalwood."

It was presented to Shri Nathji for as long as it lasted.

THE STORY OF THE EMPEROR'S TRIP IN MEVAR

The emperor stayed at Rayasagar for one night and on the next day he made his camp by the Banas River at Khamnor. There he decided, "I will stay here for one month. A garden will be built here. After I see the garden completed, I will leave."

After hearing of the emperor's plans, king Ranaji became afraid and told Shri Nathji, "Maharaj, the Mughals have come to my kingdom so I will appease them by offering them some towns."

That evening in Batara, Shri Nathji told Gangabai to tell Shri Dauji, "Tomorrow I will return to My Sinhad temple and have the afternoon offering of Utthapan there. That emperor will leave Khamnor tonight and will go to Udaipura."

At about nine o'clock that night, from Shri Nathji's temple in Sinhad, millions of very large black bees appeared and headed directly for Khamnor where the emperor's forces were. They stung all the men, horses and elephants. Hundreds of thousands of people were stung and suddenly everyone started to flee. The emperor had over one million forces with him at that time. Because they were afraid of getting stung, they fled and some forces became separated. The emperor had his queens with him and one of them



was called Rangi Dhanghi. There were always ten thousand soldiers with her and that evening she got separated from the emperor's other forces. As she wandered lost in Rajasthan, she ran into Ranaji's army on the Nahar road. At that time, Shri Ranaji Singhji knew that the emperor's queen was lost. He went to the queen and said, "You are my sister. Tell me where you want to go. I will personally escort you to the emperor."

Then the queen replied, "You are my brother in the dharma; take me directly to the emperor. Then the emperor will agree to quickly leave your kingdom."

Then Ranaji commanded his ten thousand warriors, "Bring her to the emperor."

At that time, Ranaji presented her with ten towns. Meanwhile, the emperor had gone to Udaipura and had made his camp by the lake there. When the people in the town saw his forces, they fled. By noon the next day, the emperor had not eaten any food and remarked, "I will only eat when my Rangi Dhanghi returns."

At that moment, Rangi Dhanghi came before him and told him all the news about Ranaji. "He has very graciously brought me here. I have made him my brother in the dharma. You should no longer stay in his kingdom."

Then the emperor replied, "After I make a mosque in Udaipura, I will leave."

The queen then said, "No, you should leave tomorrow. I will tell my brother, King Rana, to make a mosque in your name."

Then the queen called Ranaji and had him meet the emperor. The emperor said to Ranaji, "You have taken good care of my queen and now you are her brother in the dharma. Ask of me whatever you want. I am very pleased with you."

Then Shri Rana Singhji said, "If you are happy with me, then



quickly withdraw your forces from my kingdom. My people have fled the city.”

Then the emperor requested, “Make a mosque here in my name. I tried to make Shri Nathji, Who has left the Govardhan Hill and now resides here, live in my kingdom, but it was Shri Nathji’s wish to stay here. Live by Shri Nathji’s orders. As long as Shri Nathji lives in your kingdom in Mevar, I will not come here.”

The next day, the forces were withdrawn and they proceeded towards Dwarka. Mevar became peaceful once again. Ranaji’s entire family then returned to Udaipura. All the people who had fled from the villages and Udaipura also came back to their homes.

Meanwhile, after Shri Nathji enjoyed His Raj Bhog arati, He left Batara and returned to His temple in Sinhad where He was re-established.

SHRI PURUSHOTTAMJI PUTS GOLD-THREADED SOCKS ON SHRI NATHJI’S FEET

Once, Shri Purushottamji from Surat went to south India. When Shri Purushottamji saw the jeweled Pushkalata, he made a pair of gold-threaded socks for Shri Nathji and then quickly left for Shri Nathji’s temple. It took him longer than expected to arrive and by the time he reached the temple, Shri Nathji was no longer wearing socks as part of His daily ornamentation as the season had turned warm. Shri Purushottamji was not able to wait many months for Shri Nathji to start wearing socks again because he had to go on to Banares, where he would be victorious in scriptural debate. For this reason, he requested Shri Dauji Maharaja, “I have made some special socks for Shri Nathji, but now Shri Nathji is no longer wearing socks. I would like to know if it is possible, with your permission, to offer the socks to Shri Nathji?”



Then Shri Dauji Maharaja said, “You are a lineage holder, a descendant of Shri Gusainji. Whatever you have done, Shri Nathji will accept. Since the season for socks is over, what you should do is put them on when Shri Nathji is adorned in the morning. Shri Nathji will then wear them for an hour or so and then we will take them off.”

Having received permission from Shri Dauji, on the following day Shri Purushottamji made Shri Nathji’s ornamentation and adorned Shri Nathji with the socks he had brought from the south. Shri Dauji Maharaja daily came to offer Shri Nathji lunch as well as to have His darshan. On that day he told Shri Purushottamji, “When Shri Nathji’s garland is removed after the Raja Bhog arati, the socks should be taken off.”

Shri Dauji Maharaj then returned to his room. Later, the *mala* was put on Shri Nathji and the Raja Bhog arati was waved. Then Shri Purushottamji said to Toda Vyas, who was Shri Nathji’s *mukhiyaji* priest, “I will secretly give you one thousand coins if you allow Shri Nathji to wear those socks until the late afternoon darshan.”

Toda Vyas replied, “Shri Dauji Maharaj comes every day for the early afternoon Bhog darshan. We must take the socks off just before the Utthapan darshan opens in the early afternoon.”

They closed the temple for the midday rest and Shri Purushottamji retired to his room. All the other people who served in the temple also returned to their homes. About twenty minutes later, Shri Nathji waited to see if anyone was going to take the socks off, but when no one did, He got up and went to Khamnor.

There, Shri Harirayaji had just taken his meal and gone to sleep. Shri Nathji then entered Shri Harirayaji’s dream and told him, “Quickly come and take these socks off. I want to go to the forest.”



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

Instantly Shri Harirayaji got up from his bed. He always had some horses, elephants or wagon ready to take him to Shri Nathji's temple. They stood at attention in rotation twenty-four hours a day. He had a palanquin, oxen and a horse that pulled a chariot. Shri Hariraya then asked, "What is ready right now to take me to Shri Nathji's temple?"

His assistant, Uddhava, replied, "The horse is ready."

At that moment, Shri Hariraya sat on the horse and urged the animal quickly onwards. He reached Shri Nathji's temple twenty minutes later. He took a bath at the Banas River and, in a state of purity, went before Shri Dauji Maharaj to ask for the keys to the temple. Shri Dauji knew of Shri Harirayaji's great devotional power and he thought it must all be due to some wish of Shri Nathji. He handed the keys of the temple over to Shri Harirayaji, who then went to the temple, unlocked the door, sounded the conch and then went before Shri Nathji. Shri Harirayaji then took the socks off of Shri Nathji and, after bowing his head, he closed the curtain and locked the doors to the temple. He then returned the keys to Shri Dauji Maharaja before returning to Khamnor.

Meanwhile, Shri Purushottamji was very anxious and reflected, "Why did I insist on putting those socks on? Shri Nathji has been very troubled and Shri Dauji Maharaja will yell at Vyas and say, 'Why did you keep those socks on? From today onwards you will hesitate before you speak to any lineage holder. All things must be cleared with me. I am in charge of Shri Nathji's seva.'"

SHRI NATHJI'S ORNAMENTATION IS DONE BY SHRI BRAJARAYAJI

Another time, Shri Vallabhji's son, Shri Brajarayaji, made Shri Nathji's ornamentation. On that day, all the lineage holders and temple servers forgot to put the long quilt on the floor that leads from where Shri Nathji sits for Raja Bhoga arati to His resting



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area. At that time, Shri Nathji informed Gangabai, "Today they forgot My floor quilt so I am just standing here."

Then Gangabai told Shri Nathji, "This all has to do with Your temple worship and I do not have any entrance there. Darling, tell this all to Shri Harirayaji."

Then Shri Nathji went to Khamnor and told Shri Harirayaji, "Quickly come and put My floor quilt down. I am just standing here."

Then Shri Harirayaji left Khamnor on his horse and proceeded to Shri Nathji's temple. When he reached the Banas River, he found Gangabai waiting for him. Gangabai welcomed him with God's remembrance and said to him, "Take your bath here and quickly go. Shri Nathji is waiting."

Shri Harirayaji bathed in the river and, after dressing in temple clothes, he went before Shri Dauji Maharaja and again asked him for the keys to the temple. After he opened the temple, he bowed before Shri Nathji and fully spread the floor quilt before Shri Nathji so He could walk out of the temple. Then Shri Harirayaji closed the temple and returned to Shri Dauji's room. At that time Shri Dauji presented him a seat and Shri Harirayaji sat down. Shri Harirayaji said to Shri Dauji, "In the Vallabh lineage, you are the senior person and Shri Nathji has given you the right to serve. But if something is forgotten in the seva, it is proper that I point it out. Today, someone forgot to spread out the floor quilt before Shri Nathji. Shri Nathji had to stand there for forty minutes. He came to me and explained what had happened. So I came and spread the floor quilt out and only then could Shri Nathji go out to play in the forest."

Then Shri Dauji said to Shri Harirayaji, "We had put the floor quilt out, but it was the smaller one. That was our mistake. To understand everything I need to ask you one logical question. You are a great saint and a seer, so tell me: why did Shri Nathji



refuse to put His lotus feet on the bare floor that was not covered with the floor quilt? You see, when the seva is over, Shri Nathji wanders hundreds of miles all over Braja barefoot. Is there a rug everywhere Shri Nathji goes?"

Shri Harirayaji explained, "Shri Gusainji told Shri Nathji, 'You should place Your lotus feet upon the floor quilt' and so without it, Shri Nathji will not put His lotus feet to even the temple floor. Shri Nathji does not go against what Shri Gusainji has established. The seva that we have received comes to us through Shri Gusainji's grace. Your question concerning the land of Braja and how Shri Nathji can walk there without His padded rug I will now answer. The land of Braja is soft like butter and so wherever Shri Nathji puts His lotus feet, that piece of land becomes most pure. You see, the land of Braja is under the sway of love. It is beyond the material qualities. Braja is like a lotus and wherever Shri Nathji puts His feet down, that spot on the earth becomes as soft as lotus petals. Shri Nathji takes great pleasure when He walks on lotus petals. He takes great joy in walking around Braja. Shri Sukadevaji says in the *Shrimad Bhagavata*:

The abundant rays of the auspicious autumn moon dispelled the darkness of the night. Krishna then took the Gopis to the banks of the Yamuna River who, with her hands of waves, had scattered piles of soft sand upon her banks.

"The seva of Shri Nathji should be performed according to the teachings of Shri Gusainji. Seva should be performed at the times and in the manner prescribed by Shri Gusainji. The poet Chatrabhuja says, 'Shri Nathji's worship is prescribed by Shri Gusainji.'"

Hearing that line, Shri Dauji Maharaj became very happy. He said to Harirayaji, "You are a great soul."



Harirayaji returned to Khamnor. From that day on, Sri Dauji Maharaj was very careful in Shri Nathji's seva. If any other lineage holder made Shri Nathji's ornamentation, Shri Dauji would observe all the seva. He would go and have darshan twice a day. If there was anything lacking, he would give instructions.

SHRI NATHJI TELLS GOVINDADAS TO MAKE HIM THE SUN DOOR

There was a Vaishnava from Nandurabar named Govindadas. He was a great Krishna bhakta and would wander alone around Braj. Once, when he was in the Kokila forest, he sat under a dark Tamala tree and meditated upon the lotus feet of his guru, Shri Harirayaji. The Vaishnavas there knew he was a loner. He did not speak to anyone. At that time, Shri Nathji suddenly appeared and he had His darshan. Shri Nathji told Govindadas, "Govindadas! Go to Mevar and tell Sri Giridhariji that, when people come to loot My Annakut prasad, there is some bad behaviour. Tell him that much of the problem can be resolved if he makes a Sun Door so that people will be able to leave the temple area."

Govindadas replied, "No one is going to believe what I say."

Shri Nathji replied, "Yes, Shri Giridhariji will. Quickly go and tell him."

Govindaji then quickly went to Giridhariji and told him, "Shri Nathji told me something and He mentioned your name."

Hearing that and knowing that the Vaishnava was a bhakta, Giridhariji's voice choked with rapture. He replied to the bhakta, "Shri Nathji knows me as Shri Giridhari?"

Shri Giridhariji then made the bhakta Govinda repeat what Shri Nathji had said. Later, when Shri Giridhariji told the entire story to Shri Vitthalraya, he replied, "O brother! Today we are in the days of *Kaliyuga*, the days of quarrel. There are some people



who are hypocrites. They sometimes say things, but we cannot always believe them. When Shri Nathji tells me of His plan, then I will do it.”

Shri Giridhariji remained quiet and returned to his room.

When there were only fifteen days remaining before Annakuta, in the early morning, before it became light, Shri Nathji came into Shri Vitthalrayaji's dream and said, “You thought that Vaishnava Govinda was lying. I will only accept the Annakuta offering after the Sun Door is completed.”

Shri Nathji then returned to His temple and Shri Vitthalrayaji awoke. At that very moment he called Shri Giridhariji and said, “O brother, what that bhakta said was true. Tonight, Shri Nathji told me about the door in a dream. I have fifteen days to complete the Sun Door.”

Then he called the carpenters and told them to make the door within fifteen days. The Sun Door was completed in time and Shri Nathji took His Annakuta in the temple as planned. Every year now during the Annakuta celebration, the Sun Door is kept open.

SHRI NATHJI GIVES GOPALADAS, THE STOREROOM MANAGER, HIS DARSHAN

It was a festival day and there was an offering of Pushkal to be made in the kitchen. That offering is made on one day and offered on the following day. The cook remembered this offering, but the storeroom manager, Gopaldas, did not send the ingredients at the end of the day and told the cook, “You can take the ingredients from me tomorrow.”

That night, several hours before sunrise, Shri Nathji came before Gopaldas with a red stick while he was still sleeping. He awoke him by hitting him and said, “Why didn't you send the necessary ingredients today? It takes a long time to make that preparation. Tomorrow My lunch will be very late.”



Gopaldas saw Shri Nathji before him and said, “Let me touch Your feet.”

Shri Nathji then ran away and Gopaldas chased after Him. When they came to a closed door, Shri Nathji was able to pass through it and entered into His temple. Meanwhile Gopaldas hit his head against the door and kept saying, “Let me touch Your feet!”

Then the guard, Rai Govardhan, got up and opened his door and asked him, “Why are you hitting your head against the door? What have you seen?”

Then Gopaldas replied, “One young Boy just entered into the temple and I want to touch His feet.”

Then the guard grabbed hold of him and made him sit down, but by that time Gopaldas had become mad. He kept repeating, “I want to touch that Boy's feet.” He stopped taking all food and water.

Hearing about Gopaldas' condition, Shri Dauji Maharaja put him into a room and kept a man with him for his protection and service. Gopaldas lived for nineteen days. After Shri Nathji came to him that evening, any lack of food, water, or sleep never affected him. He kept on repeating, “I want to touch that Boy's feet.”

While repeating those words, he left his body.

SHRI NATHJI'S BHAKTA MADHAVADAS DESAI

Shri Nathji's bhakta Madhavadas lived in Mangarola; his previous name was Bhagavandas. Shri Gokulnathji changed his name to Madhavadas. He had a million gold coins and was very attached to Shri Nathji's darshan. Every third year he would take twenty thousand men with him and go to have Shri Nathji's darshan. He would support anyone who did not have enough



money for the trip. He would go for Shri Nathji's darshan during the entire intercalary (extra) month that appeared in the calendar every three years.

From the day he left his house for Shri Nathji's temple, he would give up eating anything but milk until he saw Shri Nathji.

Once Shri Nathji appeared in Madhavadas' dream and told him, "Prepare a set of lady's head-to-toe ornamentation using a hundred thousand gold coins. Put the ornaments into a box. When you come this year for My darshan, bring it and offer it to Me."

So, in 1686, this Vaishnava went to Shri Nathji's temple when there was the extra month of Chaitra. During Phalgun he had Shri Nathji's darshan during the Holi Dol festival. He brought the box of ornaments and offered it to Shri Nathji.

Then one bhakta informed Dauji Maharaja that a Vaishnava had made a hundred thousand rupees worth of ornaments and was offering them to Shri Nathji. Dauji called for the box and was very careful with it. He understood that there was some reason behind the gift of all the ornaments.

Early the next morning, Shri Nathji came and told Dauji Maharaj, "That box has the full set of women's ornaments. They should be used to adorn Gangabai. She should come for the afternoon darshan adorned with the jewels."

Shri Nathji gave the same message to Gangabai, "Put on the ornaments and come for My darshan."

Gangabai followed Shri Nathji's instructions and came during the afternoon to the temple adorned with all the costly ornaments. She gave her darshan to Shri Nathji and Shri Nathji said, "Put all of those ornaments away in My sleeping chamber."

And so it was. There are so many stories about Shri Nathji, how we could elaborate on them! Through Shri Mahaprabhuji's grace, those who belong to Him can experience it all.

EPILOGUE

The text thus ends rather abruptly, but the *lilas* of Shri Nathji continue to be performed to this very day. Shri Nathji still resides in the town of Nathdvara near Udaipur in Rajasthan. There is a small river nearby and the surrounding countryside is delightfully fertile and green. These are the ancillary blessings of having Shri Nathji reside in the area. The entire town exists to fulfill the requirements of the *seva* of Shri Nathji, Shri Navanita Priya ji, and several other images of Shri Krishna that have come to reside there as well.

After completing the translation of this work, I journeyed to Nathdvara to have the darshan of Shri Nathji. It was a reunion. I travelled there with Tulsidasi and Asim Krishnadas, both of whom had worked on the final text with me. Upon arrival, we were delighted to find the amazing story of Shri Nathji still in progress. Nathdvara was busy with pilgrims. Five or six times a day, crowds of people waited by Shri Nathji's door, anxious for His darshan to open. As soon as the gates opened, the crowd would run towards the darshan hall, anxious to have *darshan* of the *arati* or to be among the first to see Shri Nathji. Inside the temple, we could see Shri Nathji's enjoyment of His exquisite temple hangings, an example of which is illustrated on the front cover, lavish garlands and intricate ornamentation. Many of the *seva* traditions mentioned in the story continue today in Shri Nathji's daily worship.

Shri Nathji's *seva* is not only a joy for the eyes but it fills all the senses with His lila presence. Shri Nathji's *seva* is peerless and we found ourselves surrounded by thousands of other pilgrims enjoying Shri Nathji's ever-new adornments and prasada. Shri Nathji keeps the entire town in high spirits.



Shri Nathji is the Hero of a never-ending story. He shows the secret of practice, that is, how to make it come so alive that you forget that you were doing something to achieve something else. The seva of Shri Nathji is centered around His pleasure. When the Main Lila Player is pleased, His entire creation is put into a state of bliss.

The Pushthi Marga or Path of Grace is a path of spiritual nourishment. The current head of the Pushtthi Marga, Shri 108 Dauji Maharaja, a direct descendant of Shri Vallabhacharya, greeted us warmly and blessed our project with "love compliments of divine natures." To be in Shri Dauji Maharaja's presence and to see him perform Shri Nathji's seva further confirms the presence of a living tradition.

It is the sincere hope of those who made this work possible that those who will read it will experience a bit of the ineffable bliss of Shri Nathji. His sports are not confined to one temple or locale, as it is shown in this story. Shri Nathji visits His devotees wherever they may be in whatever way they have called Him. And thus, His lilas go on and on, from the beginningless Beginning to the never-ending End.

Shyamdas,
Shri Gokula, *Akshayatriya*,
9 May 1997

GLOSSARY

Acharya: A great teacher.

Akshayatriya: ("The indestructible third day"), a festival marking the commencement of the hot season, falling on the third day of the bright fortnight of Vaishakha (April/May), and also called *Candana-yatra*, when images of Krishna are covered with sandalpaste (*candana*) to cool the deity.

Aniruddha: Krishna's grandson, an incarnation of Kama, god of love.

Arati: A ritual consisting of the waving of lighted ghee-soaked wicks before a deity (or honored person).

Ashar: A hot season month corresponding to June/July.

Ashvin: An autumnal month corresponding to September/October.

Asoja: Another name for the month of Ashvin.

Astha Chhap: A group of eight poets, disciples of Vallabhacharya and his son, Sri Vitthalnathji, who saw and took part in the *lilas* which Krishna performed when He incarnated as Shri Nathji and played once again in Vraja.

Avatar: An incarnation or descent of God into the mortal world; there are many partial avatars but Krishna is considered the complete, full form of God incarnate among humans.

Baithak: A shrine marking the place where Vallabhacharya or his son, Sri Vitthalnathji, or one of his grandsons gave teachings, or where Shri Nathji stopped on His journey to Mevar.

Baliharilal: An epithet of Krishna, indicating the bhakta's dedication.



Bari vegetable: Unidentifiable; recluses living in the forest naturally learn to eat wild vegetables, fruits, and roots which may not be known in the marketplace.

Betel (pan): Areca nut and other, fragrant substances folded within a special leaf and taken after meals as an astringent breath-freshener.

Bhagavan: Personal form of Brahman, comprehending all qualities.

Bhagavata (Purana, or Shrimad Bhagavata): The most authoritative Hindu scripture describing the *lila* of Sri Krishna (in the Tenth Canto).

Bhakta: A devotee; one passionately attached to God.

Bhakta Mala: A famous work by Nabhadhas, describing well-known bhaktas from the scriptures as well as the great saints of his own time, the first half of the Seventeenth Century.

Bhakti: The practice of devotional religion.

Bhava: "Sentiment", especially those loving sentiments reserved by the bhakta for Krishna and His associates.

Brahman: Undifferentiated, impersonal Supreme Absolute, devoid of qualities.

Braja: The cowherd settlement; by extension, the land in which the cowherds, headed by Krishna's foster-father, Nanda, lived and tended their cattle, nowadays, generally the same as Mathura District.

Braja Bhaktas: Those Gopis devoted exclusively to Krishna as He appears in Braja.

Braja Vasis: Persons who live in Braja or Braja.

Chaitra: A springtime month corresponding to March/April.

Dandavati Shila: ("A stone to be prostrated to"), a large boulder of the Govardhan Hill close to Mukharvind at Jatipura into which the light from Shri Vallabhacharya's body entered after he left his body in the Ganga at Banares.



Dharma: Generally translated as righteousness or religion, it encompasses all the correct social behaviour a Hindu is to practice.

Dhoti: The traditional lower garment worn by north Indian men. It is a cloth wrapped around the waist and drawn between the legs.

Gita (or Bhagavadgita): A famous teaching given by Krishna, Who acted as charioteer for His friend, Arjuna, on the battlefield just as the war of the *Mahabharata* was about to begin.

Garga Samhita: A scripture describing Krishna's lila in Braja.

Gokulnathji, Shri: (1551-1640 or 1647), fourth son of Shri Vitthalnathji, especially revered among his seven sons, and the author or speaker of at least some of the tales recounted in this work.

Gopi Vallabha offering: "Beloved of the Gopis", also known as *Gwala bhoga* (offering to a cowherd), it is offered in the morning to Krishna as a cow herder.

Govardhan Hill: The hill in Braja picked up by Shri Krishna to protect the Braja Vasis from the deluge sent by Indra, who was infuriated that they gave his annual offering to the hill. This is the hill from which Shri Nathji appeared, early in the Fifteenth Century.

Gunja: A small red or white seed, favored by Krishna to decorated Himself with when He goes out to herd the cows in the forest.

Gusainji, Shri: An epithet of Shri Vitthalnathji (1516-1586), the second son of Sri Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhu, who carried on the work of his illustrious father.

Harirayaji, Shri: A later (1590-1715) lineage holder (descendant of Shri Vallabhacharya), a grandson of Vitthalnathji's second son; he was a respected author and commentator, and is acknowledged as composing this work, in which he is credited with great spiritual powers.



Holi: The spring festival in Phalgun, especially known for the throwing of colored powders and the shooting of fragrant colored water from large syringes called *pichakarīs*.

Indra: The King of the Gods; he is in charge of rain and tried to flood Braja when the Braja Vasis decided to offer his annual worship to the Govardhan Hill, as recommended by Krishna.

Janmashtami: Krishna's appearance day, falling at midnight of the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapad (August/September).

Kachani: A particular type of dress, something like a skirt, worn by Krishna for dancing.

Kaliyuga: The present age, considered a reprehensible time of strife and irreligious practices.

Khir: Rice cooked in sweetened milk, often with dried fruits.

Kikora vegetable: Uncultivated vegetable from the forest; possibly the fruit of the "babul" (also known as *kikara*) tree.

Krishna: The Supreme Lord Himself; the actual form of formless Brahman. He incarnated into the royal household of Mathura but was brought up by foster parents, Nanda and Yashoda, in Vraja amongst the cowherds and dairymaids who adored Him and whom He loved dearly.

Lila: The sports or pastimes Lord Krishna performs with His associates in Vraja.

Madhva Lineage: Madhavacharya, the second of the four "officially recognized" Vaishnava acharyas, founded the school of *Dvaita* (dualism), in direct opposition to Shankaracharya's *Advaita* (monism); he handed down his teachings through a lineage of *sannyasis* or renunciates. He was a worshipper of Krishna, a beautiful image of Whom he obtained from Dwaraka and installed at Udupi (in Karnataka) where it is in worship to this day.



Mahaprabhu: "Great Lord"; a title of respect used when referring to revered persons, such as Shri Vallabhacharya.

Mala: A flower (or any other sort of) garland.

Mantra: "Word of Power"; a group of words or sounds, often associated with a *hija* or seed sound, to be chanted repeatedly.

Naga Pancami: A particular day in the year when Hindus make offerings, especially of milk, to snakes (*nagas*), considered to be the original inhabitants, able to offer divine aid to friends and to hinder enemies.

Nara-Narayana: An incarnation of the Supreme Person, as Narayana; He did penance along with Nara, a human devotee, often connected with Arjuna (of the *Mahabharata*).

Narasimha Chaturdashi: The appearance day of Narasimha, the half-man (*nara*), half-lion (*simha*) form of Vishnu, which He assumed at dusk on the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight in Vaishakha. In this form He protected His bhakta, Prahlada.

Nath: A Lord; a title added to the names of several famous deities in India and Nepal (e.g., Badrinath, Kedarnath, Svayambhunath, etc.)

Pakhavaj: The elongated, double-ended drum used in traditional north Indian classical music.

Phalgun: A springtime month corresponding to February/March.

Pichhora (dress): Clothing Krishna wears during the hot season; it resembles a pair of shorts.

Pitambarā: The yellow cloth that is characteristic of Vishnu/Krishna.

Prasada: "Grace", anything that has been offered to a deity afterward, it is accepted back and used by the bhakta.

Pujari: One who performs *puja*, ritual worship of a deity in a temple.



Purushottam: "The Supreme Person", the actual form of Brahman incarnate as Krishna.

Pushthimarga: The "Path of Grace", founded by Shri Vallabhacharya and continued by his descendants.

Raja Bhoga Arati: The waving of lights before the deity after *Raja bhoga*, the "royal meal" or lunch offering.

Ras: (Literally juice, essence), divine, loving sentiments.

Rasa lila: A dance performed in a circle by Krishna with His favorite devotees, the dairymaids of Vraja, in the forest of Vrindaban on the bank of the Jamuna River during the autumnal full moon.

Roti: A flat bread, traditionally formed by hand otherwise rolled out with a rolling pin, and baked over a wood fire.

Sannyasa: The vows taken upon entering the Hindu order of renunciate monks.

Sat Ghara: "Seven houses", the home of Shri Gusainji at Mathura and the familial home of his seven sons.

Sarangi: A traditional stringed instrument used in the north Indian classical music forms known as *Shastri sangeet* and *Dhrupad-Dhamar*, the typical form of music offered to Krishna in the *havelis*, Krishna's homes in the Pushthimarga school.

Seva: Service; the services performed by a devotee for a deity or to a respected person or guest.

Shravan: A month in the rainy season corresponding to July/August.

Shri Nathji: The image of Krishna manifested from the Govardhan Hill representing Krishna as the holder of the hill. He is also known as Devadaman, Indradaman, and so forth.



Sloka: A particular metre in Sanskrit poetry and, by extension, a verse in that metre.

Smarta: Followers of the *pancayatana* form of worship, said to have been established by Shankaracharya, in which five deities (Vishnu, Shiva, Devi, Ganesha, and Surya, the Sun) are worshipped.

Tipara (crown): A typical crown worn by Krishna, formed of three parts.

Tulsi: The Goddess of Devotion, also known as Vrinda (tutelary goddess of Vrindavan, the forest of Vrinda), who takes the form of a small plant, sacred basil.

Utthapan: The offering made at four o'clock in the evening, when Krishna returns from the forest where He has been herding His cows all day.

Vaishakha: A month in the hot season corresponding to April/May.

Vaishnava: (From *Vishnu*), a devotee of any form taken by Vishnu, such as Krishna, Rama, Narasimha, and so forth.

Vallabhacharya: (1478-1530 according to this work) The fourth and last of the great Vaishnava *acharyas*, born to a Tailanga family in the forest at Camparanya. He established the school known as *Shuddhadvaita*, pure monism, in which all is the form of divinity. Vallabhacharya is said to be the transmitter of the teachings of Vishnu Swami, whose school was considered lost.

Vastupratishtha: The initial rites prior to the construction of a temple (or, in fact, any important construction).

Vijay Dashami festival: The festival marking the anniversary of Rama's victory over Ravana, celebrated on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Ashvin.



The Amazing Story of Shri Nathji

Vina: Stringed instrument used in north Indian classical music; the Indian lute.

Vishrant Ghat: A famous ghat (steps leading down to a river) on the Yamuna at Mathura, where Krishna is said to have taken rest (vishrant) after slaying Kamsa, His tyrant uncle, who had usurped the throne from his own father.

Vraja: See Braja.

Yantra: A mystical diagram, used to cast a spell or to empower a deity.

THE AMAZING STORY

of

SHRI NATHJI

Shri Nathji appeared from the Govardhan Hill, which Krishna held for seven days to protect the Brajavasis from Indra's wrath, in the early Fifteenth Century.

For many years, He continued to play there with His devotees, who sang His lilas, or sports.

When He decided to depart for Mevar in Rajasthan, to fulfill a vow He had made to a devotee. He went in procession and was the source of many adventures.

Today, Shri Nathji is one of the best known deities in India. His temple in Rajasthan, near Udaipur, is visited by many millions of pilgrims annually.

This prose work, famous in its original Brajabhasa version, evokes the spiritual atmosphere of the times of Shri Vallabhacharya and his son, Vitthalnath ji, also known as Shri Gusainji. The adventures of the deity in Braja and during the journey, and even at Nathdvara itself, are delightfully recounted here.